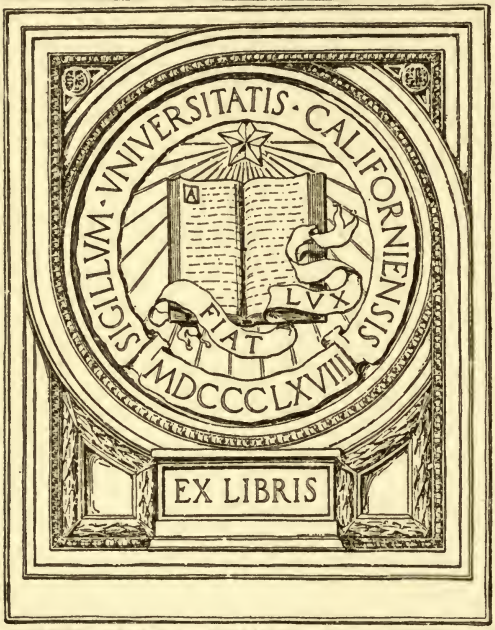
The Claw

By

Katherine Elspeth Oliver

GIFT OF
Class of 1900.



961
048
C

THE CLAW

Copyright 1914
Out West Magazine,
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

THE CLAW

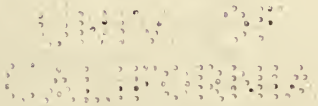
With a great happiness and gratitude I dedicate this book to *three*: to my father, whose constant and grieved concern for the things of temperance has pushed my hand to the work; to my mother, whose sweet and valiant soul was always in the Cause and whose presence I often realized as I wrote ; to the grand-father I never knew, who set the principles of his line in his answer to the oft put question, "Tammas, why is it we dinna see ye drinkin?"

"Weel, man, a've been thinkin' this while back that a've never seen ony gude frae th' drink, but muckle trouble an' I juist thocht it were a gude thing to let alane."

THE CLAW

BY

KATHERINE ELSPETH OLIVER



LOS ANGELES, CAL.
Out West Magazine
1914

Oct. 1900

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE CLAW

CHAPTER I

Some lands are made for yielding man's common needs: wheat for his bread, cotton for his clothes, lumber for his houses, coal to keep him warmed. Others minister to his luxuries—the things of his imagination. Such lands are the proper home of the idealist. He adds to his daily toil dreams and visions; his hands are working with precious things—not the things that keep him in brute existence, but that nourish the prince and god in him. At such toil men may give a lifetime and see age and the end, with nothing in their hands. Yet they have lived—lived a compound life; the actual and the dream, the reality and the trance, and the latter, like an anesthetic, has deadened the senses to material things while it loosed the spirit to the compensations of the visionary world.

The Valley of the San Joaquin, regal in its spread from the Sacramento to the gate of the Tehachapi, from the dim high rim of the Sierras to the Coast Range, a valley, soft veiled with tawny haze of mornings, at noon baring its broad expanse to the summer's trial by fire—at night, reached by the balm of the hills winds, and dreaming under starlight or the high moon—the Valley of the San Joaquin is a land made to bring forth dream stuffs.

Gold was the gift of the valley hard by—but gold is a fierce joy, it breeds fever, madness. The gift of the San Joaquin was a quieter one—portion of man's dream of contentment, of comradeship, of hospitality, of all kindly joys; the gift of the San Joaquin was wine.

***

313021

"Father says the beef must be ready at twelve on the minute."

A stocky lad of twelve stood beside the pit where two five hundred pound beeves had been roasting slowly the past ten hours under the watchful care of Garcia Ortega, the major domo, chef extraordinary, whose attention was equally divided between this interest and the great pots of *frijoles* boiling over the ruddy fires close by. The barbecue of La Mesa Vineyard was an annual event, one that ranked first among the numerous social functions of that favorite rendezvous and gave to the master of the vineyard, Douglas Cameron, the name of the largest handed man in the valley.

"And my father says, Ortega," imperiously ammended a handsome faced youth of sixteen, wheeling a nervous broncho to a standstill so impetously as to throw a flurry of dust over his brother and the watching Ortega, "My father says that you have not brought a quarter of enough wine from the cellars. He's expecting at least two hundred guests, not including the Senator's party."

"Holy Mother! You make a dust," exclaimed the Mexican in ill humor. "And does your father think me the Christ, to make wine out of water or expand the bread and fishes? I might even do that for him," he added, "if he would let me know in time. Yesterday it was one hundred and fifty he expected. The day before, one hundred, 'surely not more than one hundred—but you may prepare for a few over, Ortega that there be no skimping.' But it is the way with your father!" The man laughed indulgently. "He is not content without the whole valley. He is a worthy successor of *Don Senor* Antonio from which he had the land, if his name *is* spelled Douglas, and his son is like him." He made a low and grave obeisance, scanning with deep admiration, the gallant figure of young Douglas, sitting his saddle with nonchalant grace.

"Ye're as free wit ye're blarney as me Irish ancestor," laughed Douglas, but he appropriated the Mexican's flattery as he was wont to do such tributes, with the utmost confidence that it was due.

"All right, Ortega, see that everything's O. K. I'm going back, Duncan"—to his brother—"to see to the decorations of the pavillion, and look up my Highland togs for the dance tonight."

"All right—tell father I'll be back in time." Douglas was gone, enveloping man and boy again in his dust. The old man pulled off his sombrero and shook out the dirt, then he reached for a great iron spoon on the bench beside him and cautiously lifting the lid from one of the pots, dipped in and brought out a savory portion. He blew on it, then tasted cautiously, judiously, with the air of the connoisseur he was.

He shook his head approvingly and grunted. The younger lad was close beside him watching with utmost interest.

"All right, Ortega?" he asked anxiously.

"*Mucho bueno*!" exclaimed the Mexican, smacking his lips. He dipped another spoonful for the boy.

"But we must have more fire. *Madre de Dios*, but my old legs are stiff today from the hurry of the work and the much walking back and forth to these infernal pots!"

"You stay, Ortega—I'll get the wood." He was off, dragging from the pile of heavy oak near by great limbs that he pushed under the kettle, feeding them with smaller twigs till they made a flame from which Ortega was obliged to move precipitously. He worked with splendid energy. Younger by four years than his brother, he was stronger. His young muscles were like steel from much activity at the heavy work of the vineyard. Ortega resumed his seat contentedly and began the rolling of a cigarette. He never failed to "work" the youngest master, and did so unshamefacedly. From Douglas

he would never dream of soliciting a favor. Favors belonged to Douglas.

"He is a good boy," mused Ortega, watching the lad through the haze of his cigarette, "but his brother is smarter. His brother makes people work for him."

Meantime Douglas, issuing orders like a young prince to a band of young men and girls, the help of the place, quickly transformed the rustic dancing pavilion on the lawn, into a bower of flags and bunting in which the English and American emblems were ingeniously combined. Here the tables would be spread. The circumstance of a fractured elbow held in a heavy cast excused active participation in the work and added necessity to the role of dictator, a wholly compatible one.

"If everything's finished I'll call my father to see it." He sprang up the broad steps of the veranda from which the pavilion was reached by a wide pergola hung with languorous grape vines. In a moment the two appeared at the pavilion entrance.

Framed in the doorway, the arm of the man thrown affectionately about the shoulders of the boy, the two presented to those within a charming picture.

To have seen the son was to be prepared for seeing the father. Indeed, the odd and unconscious assumption by which he invariably used the personal pronoun before his father's name, was explained when the two were together. Cameron was Douglas' father in every sense of the word. From Cameron he drew the high, imperative spirit, the quick mind, the masterful manner. The physical characteristics were even more marked. Framed in the doorway, half stooping to meet the stature of his son, Cameron was a noble figure; slender but strong, elegant with the bearing and address of the gentleman and scholar, yet with the genial accessibility of the man of

the world and the comaraderie of the good fellow. These qualities were accentutated by the ingratiation of his smile, the grace of his unconscious jestures, the poise of his fine head, carried high and crowned with a sweep of jet black hair. He was a man marked, distinguished, fitted by nature and education for a leader in any social or intellectual circles in which his life was cast. There was no doubt of his position in the new community, made up largely of his own countrymen attracted to the valley by ambitions similar to his own.

Of all those who saw the vineyard industry of the valley with the eyes of the enthusiast Cameron was the most enthralled. He was the chief exponent, the high-priest, the interpreter of the industry in its highest form and significance. It was worth while to hear Cameron enunciate his faith, voice his visions. The most hopeless literalist, the most practical of individuals, bent wholly on proceeds and profits could not resist his spirit when, glass in hand, with eyes half closed, focussing some idyllic future, he decanted on his ambitions to promote on a noble scale the industry, at once the most primitive and classic of mankind: to see the valley a picture of contented pastoral life, a valley of homes and vineyards, of wholesome toil, of material prosperity, the invoker of all this human felicity, man's friend, sung in chronicle and story, *Wine*.

To his dissertation Cameron added the persuasions of argument, the ornament of legends and stories, words of the poets and quaint unheard of phrases from the many tongues he knew, together with his own ingenious wit, and the listener sat enthralled if not convinced. His temper was combined as is frequent in such personalities with an utter lack of the practical point.

From these circumstances, Cameron, who once was rich, was fast becoming poor. His large holdings, which his characteristic enthusiasm impelled him to purchase recklessly, con-

sisted of all manner of investments: town lots and country acres: half a dozen building blocks in the ambitious new city close at hand; an experiment in the form of a raisin candy factory; a new theater built with the philanthropic purpose of bringing entertainment to a community lacking in the drama and other forms of art, and for the opening of which he assembled, at fabulous price, a company of New York actors; and a newspaper which he edited for the exploitation of the valley's industries and which experienced so precarious an existence as to discourage all patrons not wholly enthralled by the editor's enthusiasm: last of all La Mesa Vineyard of five hundred acres.

With the naivete of a child Cameron borrowed from his friends when his funds went low and there was not one, such was the personality of the man, who did not feel it an honor to "help out" Cameron. His gratitude was effusive, and sincere. It was a part of his idealistic concepts to exalt the role of friend and invest it with a faith and chivalry admirable but extravagant.

His wife was a pale, serviceable woman. Met during an idyllic student outing in a picturesque Perthshire village, he fell in love and married her for her complexion. A poem to "Jeanie's Blushes" by the enamored youth won him his first self earned "five pound." The incident was prophetic of the future service of his wife to Cameron. The eulogized complexion faded with the birth of their first child, and Jeanie slipped simultaneously into her place as the conservitor of Cameron's material needs. None ever served a master with more singleness of heart. Whatever coquetry she might formerly have possessed that contributed to Douglas' youthful infatuation vanished in the overwhelming marvel that he had made her his wife, and induced a humility and devotion that eliminated

effectually her own personality. She had borne him many children all of whom, but two sons, had died in infancy.

Between the two sons Jeanie had succeeded in rearing for her husband, the cleavage of likeness was as perfect as between father and mother.

Duncan was his mother's son, as Douglas was his father's. He had her blue eyes and fair hair, her industry and self effacement. In fact, there had always seemed to be from his earliest consciousness, an instinctive compact between mother and son, an understanding of partnership in the service of father and son.

La Mesa Vineyard had been purchased by Cameron from the heirs of Manuel Garcia, and comprised one of the fine old Mexican land grants. It ran along the river and up to the foothills, the lower land cultivated, the rising mesa, that the new viticulturalists found to be the best of all soil suited to vineyard purposes, was given over to Ortega's herds. Cameron had bought the entire estate and set the whole vast acreage out to wine grapes of the finest variety.

The place had been worked for years by the same men, old help and their children, born and reared on the land. Cameron retained them. They were Mexicans of a superior grade, self respecting, excellent workers and faithful. The vineyard regime was not unlike that of the large English estate and Cameron's blood was such as to contribute to his other qualities those of an ideal master.

The young people greeted him with the videnees of devotion remarked by all visitors to the vineyard and the naive flattery the eloquence of which is possessed by the raggedest cholo.

***

"Buenos dias, Senor. Me alegro mucho de ver a Usted. Como esta Usted de salud?"

Cameron answered them in kind. He was versed in the tongue and it pleased him to retain it's use in his intercourse with them. He inspected the pavilion with appreciative interest, then retired to prepare to receive his guests.

They were already arriving. From all directions they came, a picturesque cavalcade. A half dozen years later, purring motor cars would have brought Cameron's guests to his door, so rapid has been the age of travel evolution. Today it was the smart stepping team of thoroughbreds and the luxurious deep seated carriage, the stylish trap, or the light run-about, the ranchman's serviceable rig. The vehicles were accompanied by a laughing racing escort of men and maidens on horseback. in a'l manner of riding dress from the effected riding togs of the newly arrived Englishman to the easy native equipment of the man or girl "born in saddle."

It was a hybrid occasion that Cameron conceived in his yearly *fiesta*. The barbecue, at noon, was characterized by all the features of the native celebration. Diversion, following the feast marked by all the delicacies of Mexican cuisine, would be provided during the afternoon when the music of castinets and mandolins would stir the drowsy air and picturesque dancers step off the graceful *fandango* and *Cachucha*.

In the evening the scene would be transformed. Latin evidences and tokens would be exchanged for Celtic; the bag pipes for the mandolins, the scones for the *tortillas*, the plaidie and ribboned cap in place of the *reboso* and the *sombrero* and where swarthy men and maids moved in the languorous steps of the southern dances. Donald, of Campbell's vineyard, and Noble's Maggie, Georgie Moore, and Annie Elliot, Bonnie Lizzie Murray and one of Dunn's two braw sons, just arrived the week end from Glasgow—you can tell the newcomer by the blisters under his pink skin—are putting through the Scotch

reel, the dance which, as an endurance test, has not been surpassed by any terpischorean rival.

But Cameron was not narrow in his hospitality. In his company was to be found not his countrymen only. Cameron, many sided, welcomed any whose temper or talents might make them worthy suc a host. He admired any man who was doing things, and there were many of that kind in the new colony. His barbecue was remarkable as a rallying place for the builders of the new commonwealth; the twang of the Yankee, the colloquialisms of the middle easterner, wisdom propounded in terms of Pike County philosophers, the flamboyancy of the westerner, and the Scotch "bur-rr" were mingled sounds in the strange and pregnant assembly—this potpouri of men, the fabric of the industrial west.

Cameron met his friends with characteristic hospitality and shortly there was the good sound of men's deep throated laughter and the gentle-women's voices. It was a notable company that Cameron had assembled, representative not only of the versatility of the new citizenship, but of the choice.

As usual, Cameron was his own toast-master, and there were none who could surpass him, none who could launch his guests more sucessively on a smooth tide of social intercourse, lending to each just the proper cue to whit his wit and call forth the response that otherwise he would have groped for.

Cameron launched for his peroration his favorite topic, "The Industry." Old as was the theme, his versatility dressed it in new and engrossing form. But in the midst he paused and concluded with an abrupt digression.

"But, ladies and gentlemen, I have been remiss. I have failed to state the real motive of this occasion. We speak of 'Western time,' and at the Rockies we find we are behind and we set up our time pieces. Western time my friends is fast.

It sets a new speed limit. Men grow old in its exigencies and the country asks for new ones. I have been envisioning for you an era which belongs not to us, but to our sons. Already it is time for me, who thought myself a youth yesterday, to step aside for the youth of today.

"This is the birthday of my eldest son. He is sixteen today. This is his feast. He doesn't know it, I think, but nevertheless, it is—we'll let him speak for himself. We'll see what he has to say for his friends." It was a test for any lad, one that few father's would have dared to make. It was characteristic that Cameron should have conceived it.

All eyes were on young Douglas. He sat in becoming obscurity at the end of the table, arranged for the younger members of the company. Secure in his oblivion he was quite ignoring the ceremonies. In fact he was better engaged. With ingratiating manner and fascinating smile, he was bending toward a little Miss at his side, a brilliant young creature with the shy bold eyes of twelve who feels womanhood stirring in her child's being. Already the subtle outlines of her young bosom spoke of dawning maturity, the maturity the west induces early. The child, was in the curve of her pouting lips, the woman lent her the coquetry that regarded the youth from under dropping lids, half shy—half saucy. Douglas was teasing the long curl that hung over h r shoulder.

There was a moment of breathless pause. The boy, of an instant the center of all eyes, turned scarlet and dropped the entangl ng lock, while his small charmer hid her blushes in her curls. Then slowly, with inimitable grace and utmost leisure, young Douglas rose. His face was pale but his eyes were sure. He began slowly, enunciating with care but unembarrassed. His composed gaze took in the entire assemblage.

"Mr. Toastmaster," he bowed with a graceful jesture toward

Cameron, "Ladies and Gentlemen: I was certainly not aware of the courtesy prepared for me. It was more than I could have thought of—dreamed of. My appreciation for the honor is not to be put into words. For, if I differ with my father, and our master of ceremonies, I am not yet a man—just a boy—and that I should have the pleasure and honor of receiving this brilliant company as my guests overwhelms me.

"But I would not be a worthy son of my father"—again the jesture of charming grace and deference—"if I had no words with which to extend you hospitality.

"It is my feast—my day!" He threw back his shoulders with an unconscious motion of new dignity and power. "Very well—I could not hope to celebrate it more auspiciously than in the company of you, my father's friends. My day? Then I propose my own toast: may I lend it—my day—as distinguished service as have you, whose day is not yet over!" He raised his glass with ineffable grace and drank. With a smile and a modest inclination of the head that included in its deference, all, he sat down. His cheeks were scarlet.

Cameron had stood during the incident with eyes intent on the lad. From watchful expectancy his expression ran a gamut of successive emotions. A characteristic gesture as when he had turned a lucky card showed his surprise and pleasure when the boy rose to his feet and with self-composure began to speak:

"Right! The lad has poise and resources—modesty, too, by Gad!"

His winning reference to Cameron's hospitality touched the father—but the toast! He could not himself have worded a more delicate phrase, that included at once modesty, self-pride and homage to his friends. It was a classic.

He had a boy after his own heart—a lad of intellect and appreciation—a man of parts. For once, in his pride and delight,

words failed the elder Douglas. Frank tears stood in his eyes. In the surprised silence that followed the boy's speech, a silence more appreciative e en than the burst of prolonged applause that succeeded it, Cameron reached across the table and gripped the boy's hand; their eyes met and held in communion deep and affecting.

The dinner advanced with increasing gaiety. The unlooked-for circumstance of Douglas' debut proved a stimulating one. There was no doubt in the minds of Cameron's friends that the incident was as impromptu as it seemed on young Douglas' part. The boy's startled look upon his father's announcement could not have been simulated. It was like Cameron to have conceived such reckless confidence in his son. Douglas' response had made a deep impression on the guests. The lad was worthy of his father. His address was a remarkable evidence of resource and self-command in a mere lad. Cameron's friends took the boy to their hearts—their company. Not a toast followed without complimentary reference to Douglas and his brilliant response, and Cameron, who was at his best in a social atmosphere of his own creating, expanded with increasing pride and delight at realization of his son's triumph.

The banquet over, the company broke up into groups, invited by their host to seek their own pleasure during a brief *siesta* before the afternoon gaieties should begin. The women repaired to the house where Jeanie extended the comfort of the darkened rooms in which—the shades having been drawn with the first rays of the sun—the temperature of early morning prevailed. The men smoked and wandered about the lawn or lounged on the broad piazzas. Indolence marked the greater number, but a group established in the wicker chairs of the pavilion porch were engaged in animated talk. Of these the Senator and Duncan formed the natural center. Murray,

Campbell, Bernardetti, Whitten and Blythe, prominent vineyard men of the community, were included in the group.

"I don't know why, if Cameron is willing, we can't put this business through right now," said Mr. Campbell. "It will mean something, Douglas, to have your place the scene of the first co-operative association of growers that succeeds in bucking the California Wine Association," he added with a laugh. "I can see this day notable in the annals of viticultural history. And we've got the Senator here with us, too. The side that has the Senator wins out, you know, these days." The men laughed approvingly. "Sure! But maybe this Senator's already spoken for," threw in Blythe.

"How about it?" they joked. "Believe we saw your name 'among those present' at the annual banquet of the Wine Association last week at the St. Francis!"

The Senator laughed amiably, and flecked the ashes from his fragrant cigar. He was a handsome man with indolent bearing, but a swift eye that unsheathed on the moment.

"A Senator is only a man," he said, "and a man never refuses the prospects of a good dinner. None of you suggests, I suppose, that Cameron feted me today on his best with an eye to getting an appropriation for his raisin candy experiment?" There was an uproar at the host's expense, in which Cameron joined. He pulled a handful of coin from his pocket.

"It's ten to one that I declare dividends before this Association does," he declared, and the laugh was turned. "But go to it men! Delighted to lend my premises for the purpose and thereby share in whatever fame is forthcoming, since it's the only share I expect to hold in the enterprise."

"What's the matter, ar'n't you going into this, Cameron?" asked the Senator.

"Not I, and for two very good reasons. First, I haven't the money. My funds are tied up in other ways—in my raisin

candy folly and others. But, besides, I've no mind for dealing with the business end of the industry—the marketing end. You know me. I've dipped into a lot of things here, like most folks that had a little money to squander. It's the way of the country. You're first on the ground. Your head is turned—things look so devilish promising, you know. And you grab all ways at once. But, really, the only thing I want, and the only thing I'm fit for is to engage in a business where the Almighty and a few Mexicans do the work and I reap the proceeds. This, I take it, is the vineyard industry. I've been looking for just such a thing all my life and now I've found it I propose to stay with it. If these gentlemen find a way of co-operating with Providence and controlling prices to our benefit I'm perfectly willing, and say, 'God Speed'—but theirs is the pleasure, not mine."

"Cameron's confidence in Providence is commendable," commented Whitten, "and his ambitions not to interfere by his own efforts, worthy. But the trouble is, as you know, Senator, the California Wine Association is a bigger institution than Providence now-a-days, and we growers are being squeezed. We don't propose to have 't so and believe the way to pry 'em loose is to organize."

"And you think you can beat their game?"

"We can try. We surely have to do something. A man can't live at present prices; with grapes bringing only six dollars a ton at the wineries. What do you suppose a man gets out of that? He doesn't pay the interest on the investment, let alone the running expenses of his place. In other words he's in a hole."

"That's what the California Wine Association paid last year—six dollars?" queried a man in the group bearing the unmistakable signs of the new-comer.

"That's what they paid, and by the way, Mr. Jones, as one

of the new and heaviest owners of vineyard acreage in the county, you ought to be mighty interested in this proposition. Senator, this is Mr. Jones, of Missouri. He's just bought three hundred acres west of town, that he's going to set out to wine grapes.

"Mr. Campbell, Mr. Murray—Mr. Jones. You've met Mr Blythe already, I believe.

"Yes sir. To return to the proposition, we got the munificent sum of six dollars a ton for our best wine grapes, *delivered*, last fall. They offered us four dollars for the second crop, Muscats, and most of us kept 'em and fed 'em to the stock."

"This California Wine Association—it handles the wine-grape crop of the State? It controls prices? In other words, it's a big monopolizing agency—both buying and selling—and made up of wine men?"

"Whist, mon! Ther-r-r no wine men at a'. It's a cor-r-poration on paper, that's what it is. Capiteelists you say—yes, that's made their money some w'y and ony w'y!" It was Murray breaking into the conversation with vigorous and angry burr-r. He was one of the Independents who, at the expense of much pains and money had built up a thriving winery, and was being hard pushed by the encroaching association.

"Murray is right," answered Whitten, "it's made up largely of capitalists, San Francisco money mainly; the wealthy Jews of the Bay; the owners of the big wholesale and retail houses up and down the coast and valley."

"And they make a good thing out of it?"

"Well, rather", replied Whittier. "With brandy retailing at $2.00 a gallon, and other liquors accordingly. It rather looks as if they made something.

"They've got their stock excuses for giving us the little end of the handle. Too much vineyard acreage; insufficient demand

for the product; Eastern markets reluctant to handle California goods—foreign wine preferred; the Association at a big expense to exploit our interests."

"It's all right—there *is* a big expense attached", said Campbell. "We're willing that they should make their share, but with the present quotation on California liquors I guess they're doing it, and there's a chance for them to have it, and at the same time for the grower to live. That s not their idea, however, and it's time we broke into the game.

"We believe by organization we producers can utilize our own products, manufacture our own goods and get it in the markets with profit to ourselves and without skinning the consumer, either."

"Maybe so," answered the new-comer, doubtfully, "but it's just the same proposition we Middle-Easterners are up against in the hog trust, and the beef trust, and the cotton trust, and everything else of the sort where capital is pitted against the individual, or aggregation of individuals. You think you'll organize as independents and put down prices to a reasonable amount and get the trade, but the trouble lies with the 'dear people.' They're going to buy where they can get the goods the cheapest. You can cut prices till you're black in the face, but the big business—the trust—can under-cut you every time. And the producer—what about him? Why, he's the fellow that gets squeezed from start to finish by everybody." He sighed humorously.

"Lord! I thought I'd left such things behind when I reached California," he continued. "I thought I'd got to the land of perfection, 'where the wicked cease from troubling, an' the weary are at rest.' " The men laughed.

"Why, I thought the California Wine Association was one of the benevolent institutions of the State that had settled the

problems of the grower to the complete satisfaction of all. And all we had to do was to reap our harvests and coin at frequent and regular intervals. That's the way it sounded in the prospectuses your Chamber of Commerce sent out where it gave a page to the careful analysis of the marketing methods of the industry. And I took it all in—swallowed it whole! That's just how big a fool a man'll be even after he's been sold once or twice." Cameron interfered:

"You're getting too pessimistic, Mr. Jones. This won't do. There's money in a vineyard—in a wine vineyard. There can't help but be. There has been in the past, and there will be again. The California Wine Association did well by us when it was first organized, but we're meeting just now the same thing any industry does—the re-adjustment time—the time of the bigger proposition, when the business is growing away from its nurse and striking out for itself. The Wine Association, like the nurse, would like to keep hold of the infant a while longer. She's had her troubles, nursing it along to its present husky condition, and now that it's big enough to serve her she's anxious to get her rewards. But of course it isn't right, and the infant's bound to break away in time. These gentlemen think that time has come, right now. It'll undoubtedly mean a few years of experiment and perhaps some hardship, but things will get whipped into shape again in time and the industry will forge ahead as it never has before."

"Your straight proposition is?" pursued the Missourian. With his discoveries he was anxious to get at the heart of the matter at once.

"There are five of us here who are putting one thousand dollars each into a business we will call the Riverside Co-operative Wine Association," explained Whittier. "We're all growers. We propose to manufacture our own goods from

our own grapes, and those of our neighbors, and create a market for it."

"You'll excuse me, won't you, gentlemen," said Cameron, interrupting, "I'll have to go and look after the comfort of my other guests. Go right ahead; I'm with you as far as the moral support is concerned, and the product of my five hundred acres. No, by Gad, to show I'm game, I'll get into the deal—I'll make up the sixth member, and I'd advise my friend here," indicating the Missourian, "to do likewise."

The men remained in further counsel, and before the group had broken up another of the many independent wine associations being organized at this period throughout the valley, was formed, with the purpose in view of putting up successful competition against the California Wine Association, the principal wine marketing organization of the State, and a trust of powerful influence.

As the group dispersed, Cameron, Whitten and the Missourian remained in desultory conversation. The latter was immensely interested in the gathering, the character of which, like every other feature of the country, was new to him. His instincts told him the occasion was a fine opportunity for learning the personnel of the community and the men with whom later, as a citizen and larger producer, he would have much to do. He was not slow in asking questions, his enterprise in that line and his shrewd deductions rapidly acquainting him with the local situation.

"Who's that man over there with the bald head and the large shelf in front?" he asked Whitten, indicating a portly gentleman occupying a comfortable, easy chair on the veranda.

"That's the State Controller, Smith. He came with the Senator's party."

"Hum! Should think he might be able to control things if he took a notion to sit on 'em hard. And the woman that's

just coming out of the door with the funny-doodles in her hair and the don't-remember-to-have-met-you expression?"

"That's the Senator's wife, I believe," answered Whitten in some amusement.

"An' those men Cameron's walking with and talking to so affable-like just now?"

"That's Overmeyer and Layton, two of the board members of the California Wine Association—San Francisco men." The man's jaw dropped.

"Well I'll be gol darned. Say—I cain't get ust to this kid-glove, gum-swappin' business with the men that's done you dirt. D'ye s'pose, if I was in Cameron's place—with five hundred acres of th' best grape-growing land in California, and still havin' to live on my remittance 'cause those fellows was pocketing my proceeds—that I'd invite 'em to my home, an' be hob-nobbin with 'em 's'f they was a distant relative that was going to leave me their money when they died?

"I'm fr'm Missouri, an' that aint the way we do things back there. There's just one thing that marks off between our friends and our enemies, and that's grandad's old shot-gun."

Whitten laughed.

"Your sincerity does you credit, my friend, but you're primitive. Your kind of policy leaves too few to share the dividends with. Now it's a lot better to do like Cameron and the rest of us—make friends with your enemy. When he beats you at your game you can sit in with him and help him rake in the cards."

Following the barbecue, while the others were enjoying the relaxations of the *siesta* hour, Douglas deserted the company. The enforced inactivity of several weeks, occasion d by his injury had impaired, somewhat, his vigor. He was, by nature, temperamental in the extreme, and the excitements of the hour, and his own part in it, had left him exhausted. He

wanted to get away from it—relax, and rest up for the evening, the diversions of which would tax the most robust. There was nothing like the river for rest and indolence.

His boat and his horse were his prime pleasures, ordinarily. Like all other pastimes, he shared them rarely with his brother. The minds of the two were not compatible, even barring the difference in age. Duncan had less leisure for pleasure than his brother. He seemed to always find something to do—an irritating quality to a leisure-loving person who enjoys relaxation and the pleasures of the mind, and is disturbed by the show of too much activity on the part of others.

For his pastime, Douglas had a companion, however, of utmost congeniality. That was Ortega. The man was, himself, a "character." His claims of age and decrepitude were largely assumed. He was the senior member of the little colony of vineyard laborers, and therefore claimed the privileges and advantages forthcoming—the role f patriarch. As a matter of fact, he was barely fifty, a man of splendid stature and proportions, the best swimmer and wrestler of the country round and a horseman of fame. He was a half-breed and full of the lore of his people; Mexican history and legends, with their characteristic embellishments lent by much telling by imaginative narrators; Indian arts and traditions. He was a prime companion, an unexcelled entertainer, especially when his natural eloquence and imagination were stimulated to the proper point by the judicious infusion of *"vino."*

For the boy, the old man had the devoted affection, half of servant, half of father. Douglas was his much-beloved—his ideal. He had a large hand in his rearing, undertaken at the day of their first acquaintance, ten years before. Douglas spoke his own tongue like one of his sons. He was at Douglas' disposal at all times.

Today Douglas had special need of him, his crippled arm

fore-stalling any work at the oars. He was pretty certain, too, that Ortega had reached the ideal stage for entertainment purposes; in fact, it so proved when Douglas sought him, sprawled on a bench in the shadow of the carraige house, addressing himself in vivacious terms to the atmosphere. Ortega had abstained for two days now, in the interests of his master's feast, a mark of devotion greater than which Cameron could not have asked. As relief from his duties approached, he had begun drinking deeply that no time might be lost. He was now properly primed to afford just the diversion Douglas craved, to bring forth on slight encouragement all his store of quaint philosophy, shrewd wit and imaginative talents; while the exercise afforded by rowing, Douglas argued, would keep him from lapsing into premature desuetude.

"Oh, come on, Ortega! I'll give you an audience worthy of you. It's me for the river. This social whirl is too much, I say, Ortega," as that individual dismounted from his seat and prepared to follow him with some difficulty. "You know that was some speech I made. Dad, the old coger, called me for a toast without saying a word to me about it beforehand. Don't know what he thought I'd do—run, faint, or something. But I called his bluff. Got up and gave 'em a talk right off the reel that they're all buzzing about. Funny, really! I didn't know it was in me. Dad's awful proud."

"What, you!—a speech? You made a speech, *Caramba*! But you do not surprise me. If you did one-half as well as you think, it must have been a great success," agreed Ortega, with enthusiam. Douglas laughed and reddened. One of the characteristics of Ortega's alcoholic perorations was his candor.

"Well, say what you like, but it *was* a success." The men all said so; and the ladies—I received the most dulcet smiles from them! Guess I must be getting a man, as Dad said; but Lord! I'm tired, and this shoulder drags like a water-soaked log,

from this wretched cast. Ortega, you may have the pleasure of doing all the rowing today. Pull the boat up nearer"—they were at the little landing—"there."

He climbed in and took a seat in the end; Ortega, with some difficulty, followed. He slipped the rope, pushed the little craft from the landing side and took up the oars. Douglas leaned back in lazy contentment.

"Lord-ee! Ain't this a great day! Great day to row. If I didn't have this game arm, I'd take those oars and row to the forks and back, and you, Ortega, could resign yourself to the arms of Morpheus toward whom I can see you are already yearning."

It *was* a great day—one of the valley's perfect days. The sky was unbelievably blue—the blue that follows a spring rain. Leaf and blade scintillated in the high noon-day sun. The hills across the river were aflame with poppies. Nearer, on the little flat along which he road ran, the orange and green was blotched with the vivid hue of the purple lupin, a combination so daring that a timid artist would dilute his colors. In the little draws the sunshine of the wild mustard lay, and a hundred other flowers of lesser showiness contributed to the brilliant landscape. The river was flushed with the spring freshets, fed by the melting mountain snows. It lay full and deep from bank to bank, languorous and dark beneath the overhanging cottonwood and willow trees; in the center the current swept swift and shimmering like a steel ribbon over unseen wheels. There was no wind, and sounds carried far on the quiet air: the mocking bird and meadow-lark in competition of spring praise over head; the far-off bleat of Donohue's sheep; Campbell's man half a mile away, shouting to his team; the sound of the mandolins; and now and then the high, far-carrying voice of women's laughter. All these reached the river, but

were softened into a dreamy medley that enhanced the isolation of the two men.

Ortega, with a brave effort, swung the boat well out toward the center and on its way, then drooped listlessly over the oars, his eyes drowsing on space.

"Come!" cried Douglas, "Wake up! What did I bring you out here for, but for the benefit of your muscle and your linguistic powers? I see where I'm left both ways, and will be hauling in with one hand a dead-to-the-world Mexican in half an hour. I say, Ortega, come out of it! Look to your oars and talk."

Ortega blinked at the boy confusedly and endeavored to rouse himself from growing lethargy. He held the oars aslant and let the current carry them, while he essayed to rally his mental powers.

"You know," continued Douglas, in bombastic style and mock reproof, "it's really a disgrace, this. You ought to drop it out—the booze. There's no opprobrium attached to stimulating your natural eloquence with a little *vino*, but to drink yourself into unsociability and oblivion is stupid. My father has no use for such asininity. He says it's bad form, and he can forgive anything but that. My father hasn't any use for a man that has so little brains as to get drunk. If any man makes an ass of himself today—you'll see—he won't get an invitation next year."

Douglas had accomplished his object and prodded Ortega back to life and combativeness. The latter roused and waved a preliminary hand.

"*Bastante, muchacho mio*—enough, my boy! You are but a prattling infant. Ortega will correct at the same time your ignorance and your manners. You assert that the drinking of much wine is foolishness, and you have the temerity to upbraid

your senior—you, who know not a man's thirst, being but a few years removed from your mother's nipple.

"To drink, my son, to drink—much—ah—*muchissimo*, that is not foolishness. For to drink *mucho—muy mucho*—is to encourage the industry, and to encourage the industry (can you follow my logic, oh little one?) is to increase the vineyard acreage into a vast and glorious commonwealth, which is a thing greatly to be desired. Heard I not your father say so today in his great oration?" Douglas was much diverted. He laughed uproariously at the spectacle of Ortega's earnestness and prodded him farther.

"But you, Ortega, your sprees don't help my father's industry. You guzzle quarts on the house."

Ortega regarded his young master with a grieved expression. He removed his sombrero and passed his hand thoughtfully over his forehead, then his face cleared and he beamed on Douglas with condescendsion.

"That, my son, is a remark that does but show your obtuseness. Ortega drinks. He drinks much, by the generosity of *Senor* Cameron, that is true—that is certainly true. *Madre de Dios*, that is *very* true! But, my son, does he not go to town every month-end, on the evening of pay-day, and expend a large portion of his earnings? *Maria Madre*! a very large portion!" added Ortega, in regretful reminiscence, "over Mister O'Hooligan's bar? So does he stimulate the retail business."

Douglas roared with mirth. He thought how he would regale his guests tonight with Ortega's logic. Ortega, for the time, had banished Morpheus and invoked Mars. He let the oars swing in their sockets while his hands abbetted his eloquence. He repeated his arguments in revised terms, emphasizing his convictions with a vigorous fist. He implored Douglas by all his saints to deny that his reasoning was sound. He started to his feet to defy an answer.

"Sit down! Sit down! You fool!" shouted Douglas, in throes of mirth. "Don't you know you'll tip this boat over and I can swim about like a rock with this cast on?"

Ortega responded unexpectedly. The postponed lethargy claimed him and he sank down abruptly and heavily, his body sagging over the water. Douglas started forward—the boat dipped. It careened to one side and over. Ortega, on the edge, slipped gently into the water, but the craft caught the boy beneath it and swung out into the swift current.

When Ortega rose to the surface he was sober, and the significance of the catastrophe flashed instantly into his mind. He struck out to the boy's rescue, the recollection of Douglas' handicap inspiring desperate strength. The lad was not in sight. The overturned boat suggested the worst. It was already several rods away and moving rapidly.

Ortega pursued frantically and vainly till a deep eddy caught and whirled it, and on the rise the boy's body emerged from beneath, struggling faintly. The current, circling, flung it toward Ortega; he seized it in a frantic grasp. The eddy sucked at them both, whirled them twice around and flung them shoreward. Ortega, with super-human strength, wrenched himself and his burden from the grip of the current and struck out into shallow water.

He bore it to the shore and fell upon it with all the frantic measures of resuscitation his experience knew, all the while shouting for help, praying, calling the boy's name, imploring all the saints he knew to bring the loved spirit back.

They met him at last when he had struggled half way up the plowed vineyard, the body of young Douglas in his arms. He gave it into someone's hands and fled back to the river. He stopped on the spot, all wet, where the body of the boy had lain. He lifted his face to the sky—unbelievably blue—his eyes staring, his hands outstretched and clenched, the water

dripping from his wet clothe . *"Oh, Dios! Oh, Dios!"* he repeated in agony.

He dropped to his knees, grovelling, his head wrung in his arms. He strained forward and took the imagined dead face in his hands, gazing on it despairingly.

"Oh, mi muchacho!" he sobbed. *"Estas muerto! Estas muerto y yo tengo la culpa!"* He flung himself to his feet with a great cry and ran to the water's edge. Something keen from his blouse found his throat, and he fell forward into the water where the current swept close to the bank. Up at the house the last merry-making of La Mesa Vineyard was at an end.

CHAPTER II.

The loss of a child includes for the parent two privations: the parental and the personal. The one involves the affections —that tenderness and devotion that offspring calls forth and that the growing personality of the child enhances; the other the expectancy provided by the unfolding life, the possibility of the child as an embodiment of the dearest ideals of the parent: the defeated purposes, the handicapped attainment, the incomplete accomplishments of one life finding fulfillment and completion in another—a second and complete self. In degree as there is family pride and ambition the latter bereavement is felt a large, if indeterminable factor of the grief as suffered by Cameron in the loss of his son.

Douglas had been to him at once his dearest possession and his most promising. It had been his rarest diversion, the development of the boy's quick mind along the lines of study most gratifying to himself, and his greatest happiness, the companionship of the lad whose tastes and instincts were a transcript of his own. The boy's companionship was, in fact, the only real one his family supplied. It constituted in part that sympathy and fellowship that would have been provided by a more compatible marriage. It was in the nature of things that his affection and self centered pride should have been lavished on the son of his own likeness, to the neglect of the son who was the counterpart of his mother. But Douglas had afforded another and wholesome element; namely, the first and only resistance the domineering self willed man had known in his family. Between the two was understanding and affection of a rare nature, but the very likeness of the boy in his personal traits to his father, provided for resistance. It was an exhilarating experience to meet with spirit in his son; his respect

and affection for the boy were increased thereby. Douglas' imperiousness, his evidence of high temper, and self will, even the occasional differences between father and son, when the latter resisted not infrequently with success his father's will, were occasions of secret gratification to the man.

That Douglas should have been cut off at a time—an hour—when the powers of his dawning manhood were brilliantly evident to all, was one of those circumstances that seem to mark the fate with a peculiar genius of irony and choice.

The tragedy, blighting in its significence and suddenness, plunged Cameron into an abyss such as is experienced only by one of his temperament and intellectual type, one in which ravished love, denied ambition, the frustration of the most cherished purposes of a self willed man, struggled impotently and despairingly in intellectual travail with the mute and unanswerable Power.

It was characteristic that in the exigencies of Cameron's grief, and the violence of the sickness, mental and physical, which attended it for many months, the paler grief of the mother and son should have been overshadowed, submerged, as all things personal with them, in concern for the father.

Through sleepless nights and watchful days the silent woman and undemonstrative boy served in their partnership of service. In their dumb sorrow was a deeper pathos than that of the rebellious man: a subtle reproach—the realization of how inadequate was their devotion to compensate in the slightest degree for the loss of this son; how far short they fell of taking the smallest place in the room of his affections left vacant and deserted by the vanished boy.

It was a grief not to be imparted or shared even by each other; one to be worn, like some sad scar, unguessed by others, the dull pain of which is forgotten only in activity and self-forgetfulness.

There was ample opportunity for this in other than immediate service to the sick man. The affairs of the place were going badly. Cameron's sickness stretched out for many months and was followed by a chronic invalidism marked by still greater inattention to the practical, still looser modes of business, less capacity for execution in any line of work than had characterized him before. His erraticism increased, combined with an irritability new to him. His grief, surface healed, beneath, changed gradually the tissues of his temperament. His sunniness was overcast, his optimism, provided by the circumstances of a philosophical mind, healthy animal spirits and environment inimicable to hopefulness, was shattered by the tragedy. Life, which once turned toward him an aspect beneficent and inviting, now appeared hideous and inexplicable. Beneath every day intercourse and affairs his restless and quickened mind wrestled to exhaustion with the Problem.

Behind all the ordinary transactions of the day which he gradually resumed was the vivid want of the companionship of his son. For both his intellectual travail and his grief—there was only one surcease—oblivion, but sleep evaded him all too often. In his extremity, La Mesa Vineyard, the enterprise which together with other personal interests had lost meaning and significance at least yielded him the service of provisional relief.

Cameron, who had dreamed, in a day which seemed now to have had no existence, of her rich fruit as a multiplier of human contentment, now drank increasingly of her vintage to dull the pangs of a never-laid sorrow and the ceaseless turnings of his weary mind on the relentless wheel of the eternal, "Why?"

Young Douglas slept under a noble stone on the high slope of the vineyard. His resting place swept in its view the whole valley. It was like the boy's life had been, thought Cameron, large and free. Ortega's recovered body was laid close by. It

seemed appropriate to Cameron that the faithfulness of the half-breed should be rewarded thus. It was a strange circumstance that the voluntary expiation which the frenzied man had made for his inadvertant crime was in the eyes of his young master's family interpreted in terms wholly of devotion. Ortega was not only the would-be rescuer of the boy, who, seeing his plight from the banks had plunged into the river to his rescue, but his heroism was of a higher sort and one compatible with his hot mingled blood. It was an incident remarkable, unrecorded before. Its devotion lent new luster to the boy's ingratiating qualities and exalted Ortega's own humble role as friend and servant. The incident held an impressive place in the tragic episode, as recorded in the family's history, but its real significance, such as the strange ruling of fate, was never to be known, possessed only by the quiet sleepers on the hill.

CHAPTER III.

No one ever served a cause with a heavier handicap than did Jeanie and her boy, the family enterprise. It was in the nature both of his Scotch ancestry and his own personality that Cameron, however unfitted for the responsibility, should administer his business affairs wholly himself, excluding his wife and son both from his confidence and from the knowledge of anything but the active details of the industry. It was also in the nature of things that these transactions should have been unquestioned by them. Cameron combined with a nature, erratic and impractical, that frequent supplement, a dominating personality, which over-rules opposition and wrests confidence by the force of it's own certainty.

In the presence of his wife and youngest son, his victory had been an easy one His domination was complete—and disastrous. To Jeanie it was accustomed, the experience of a life time beginning with the masculine domination of her father's family. It was natural that she should have no part in her husband's life other than to serve him and his children with the work of her two hands.

For Duncan the policy of his father was peculiarly unfortunate. He already had too much of his mother's self repression and deprecation. At twelve he toiled at man's work with men on the vineyard, but he worked mainly with brawn and muscle. His mind was enthralled, and dependent; his powers of thought repressed by the domination of his father's compelling mind, when they should have been advancing in pace with his physical development. His mental world was restricted to the field of his father's opinions, and his father's prejudices were impressed upon his young mind with the ineffaceableness that a mature personality may effect on a

young and impressionable child who is prepar d by affection and devotion to receive those impressions. For Duncan worshipped his father with a passion that admitted no variance or question of his will.

With Douglas it would have been different. Douglas would have permitted no intellectual domination where his own curiosity or impulses led, but the misfortune worked him by his father's policy were already evident before his death, in his natural indolence, emphasized by the lack of responsibility, and his readiness to shirk taxing activities. In later life Douglas would have wrested his share of power and domination and reserved the privilege of ease and luxury in which he was trained. It was not impossible that the father's mistaken regime would have worked for Douglas—tempermental self-indulgent, imaginative—even greater misfortune than that for the younger boy.

The immediate and practical result of Cameron's mistaken regime was to effect a peculiar situation: Jeanie and Duncan toiled incessantly. Jeanie, indoors, bent all her energy and native thrift on the things of the household, and those supplementary activities, the poultry, the garden and the dairy—that supplemented the family resources. Duncan, keen to every practica' detail of the ranch, served where a hand was most needed, substituted unobtrusively but efficiently his own authority when authority fell from the lax hands of his father and the enterprise dragged for want of direction. He was a host in his young strength, his foresight, his ability to get on with the men. Both worked at the top of their strength with the wonderful energy and self denial which is not to be found outside the Scotch breed. But it was a work in the dark, and one robbed of its rewards, for, to the splendid efficiency of the workers was combined the imposed ignorance of the business end of the family enterprises. The financial administration

still rested with Cameron, who, increasingly unfit, yet, with the knowledge of his failing power and the stubborness of his old domineering way, still presisted in monoplizing his former authority.

It is the tragedy of some lives that even their virtues antagonize those whose love they most crave. Cameron at all times somewhat deprecative of practical gifts, in the irritation induced by his ingrowing sorrow and the aggravation contributed by increasing use of stimulants, found less and less pleasure in his wife and son. Possibly, too, his knowledge that their industry covered much of his lack contributed to his impatience. There are certain mental conditions that cause dislocation of the reasoning process. These conditions, compounded of disappointments, frustrations and physical weakness frequently induce in the sanest and most charitable of minds, sad changes that misjudge motives, assigning attentions of hurt to those who are serving them most faithfully.

Cameron had reached that state. The two watched his transformation with a distress they did not impart to each other. This new burden, like all others, Jeanie took up and carried uncomplainingly. The thoughts of the boy, none knew. The child born with the physical defect, accepts the affliction with philosophy. Duncan from the first had known a lack in his father's love but he had accepted it without question. It seemed entirely natural that Douglas, who dominated his own childish mind with his ingratiating charms, should receive more from his father, and from all, than himself.

When elements of strength in one are shattered, it is sometimes the lesser and inferior things of one's nature that rally the prostrated and disordered powers. Cameron's natural vanity emerged from the wreck of his expectations, and prompted the raising of some new objects of ambition. With less ability than ever to man a large project, his mind turned over more

with a new tenacity to the establishment of a family monument comprised by the large holdings of La Mesa Vineyard. Simultaneously his long deferred interest turned toward Duncan with ambitions to make of the son that remained to him a man worthy of his name.

Duncan's schooling had been followed precariously. He had missed an entire term and known many broken ones. Cameron thought with a start of reproach of the neglect the boy had suffered. It occured to him suddenly that Duncan, who already stood five feet seven in his stocking feet and was the strongest man on the place knew not a line of Latin and had never heard of Goethe.

Duncan was put into school. He finished the grammar school and the high school. He did not distinguish himself particularly in either. His habits of study had been broken up; he had worked too much for his age. His mind was slow and thinking, the kind required by the books, came hard. His mind and heart were at the vineyard. He was needed there. While he was trying to determine the value of "x", he was wondering if Morton, the new foreman Cameron had installed in his place, had remembered to hire the extra gang for the week's picking.

These digressions did not assist concentration but he did his best. He prodded his reluctant mind to the task in hand. He studied when his hand itched to grip the plow handle and his mind was distracted with the problem of Morton's next month's salary. He fought shyness, chagrin and the sense of his own backwardness. He made a creditable, if not brilliant record for himself in English, for which he had little taste and the languages which he despised. He suffered with the martyrs on oratorical days because public speaking was a part of a gentleman's training; he died figurative deaths in the parlors of the country side in pursuit of the graces that belong to a gentleman.

The sweat of his social efforts soaked his comfortless linen more than toil on his knees down the vineyard rows under scorching sun. It was an heroic task admixed with tragedy and a grim humor: Duncan, revising nature in his substitution for Douglas, Duncan, his normal gifts of service to his family rejected, throwing into the hopeless cause all the grim and unrelenting purpose of a successful issue.

He finished the high school in the nearby town. His father's purpose for him meant the State University for three years and a year at one of the eastern institutions, not that Cameron could afford it. His fortunes were steadily declining. A fire that destroyed half of the business section of the new town, wiped out his rental property and his raisin candy plant. His newspaper enterprise had failed from lack of attention and want of business ability behind it. He had reserved a few shares of stock in the company that bought out the establishment but the paper was seeing hard sledding with a new and pushing contemporary in the field.

But the first, the vineyard, had failed to pay out. Cameron had bought too much acreage. He had insisted on getting it all under cultivation at once. The cost had been enormous and used up all his funds. Also, the Missourian's prophecy came true. The new co-operative associations f rmed to break into the business of the wine trust, and wrest for the producer his just p ofits had only succeeded in making matters worse and precipitating a throat cutting re ime before unknown in the annals of the industry.

For a time, to be sure the game was evenly played. The new association by putting into the business their own grapes as well as those of their neighbors, were able to manufacture their goods and undersell the trust at a profit in its own market. But this state of affairs could not last for long. The California Association quickly rallied to the emergency and under-cut

the co-operatives. The co-operatives put their goods down still lower. And so the game went. There were seasons when California port wine retailing normally at from $1.20 to $3.00 a gallon, according to proof, dropped to sixteen cents a gallon and when wine grapes which at top price had sold at the wineries for $25.00 a ton went down to $4.00.

The co-operatives were game. There were years in succession when they threw their own grapes into the business and took out nothing for them in a splendid gamble on a chance that had no possibility of winning from the very nature of it. For it meant a loose body of men, not all of whom were experienced in the grim fighting mode of commercial warfare and who, at all times, were handicapped by insufficient financial backing, pitted against an organization that possessed all the resources of the commercial victor, capital, prestige and the political power which those possessions are able to wield.

In digust the growers by the hundred, budded over their vines to raisin or table grapes or pulled them up and planted their land to fruit orchards, the soil being of the best for either purpose. Even oranges in large areas began to grow along the river and foothills. For all such produce there was generous demand and excellent profits. Others sold out and went into the end of the business illustrated by the California Wine Association as the really paying one—that of the wholesale or retail liquor dealer. There were few whose original ambitions toward the industry incited them to persist in a business in which the proceeds consisted mainly of next season's expectations, but Cameron was one of these.

It was from his old neighbors who had partially or wholly deserted the ranks of the producer for those of the manufacturer or wholesale business, that Cameron borrowed to keep his enterprise afloat. They had money to loan. They were generous in their terms. It was to their interest that the

great wine producing acreage should be kept. Each disappointing year they extended the time of payments or renewed old mortgages with hearty assurance of their pleasure in being able to serve a friend and condolences upon conditions that proved inimical to his business. Their sympathy and encouragement restored his confidence and renewed his persistence in the industry after each disastrous year. More than anything else they stood for the invokers of the former times—of Cameron's old, admirable self, from which he was parting in a transformation rapid and menacing. Their hours of intercourse with him restored the old days with their charm, their promise, their light heartedness, in the glamour of which lurked the spirit of the lost and idealized boy.

CHAPTER FOUR

Duncan went to college. He went as he had gone to school, every desire in him pulling toward home. He was needed there—how much, not even Jeanie knew. The last picture of his home invisioned by his memory emphasized that need with a vividness that he carried through all after years with pain: the veranda bearing its need of paint and repairs to the morning sun; Jeanie, the flush of weariness in her cheeks at nine, hurrying from the back of the house to the farewell; his father after one of his sleepless nights, physical and mental rack showing in his white face, his haggard eyes, and the unwonted excitement provided by the departure.

The Scotch say little at their farewells. Duncan kissed his mother and his father gave him his hand—a hand of transparency, in which was expressed all the refinement the inward delicacy of the man, the things that furnished both his weakness and his charm. Its delicacy as he took it in his own strong one, effected Duncan as nothing else would have done:

"Father!" he cried, "I can't go. You need me—let me stay!"

The answer was undeserved, it was the word of a sick man in hard straights to keep himself in hand, and Duncan forgave him at the gate:

"My God, boy, have y' no spirit—your brother would have done better."

Duncan's first college year was broken by his father's death. The doctor called it heart trouble. The boy received the telegram, telling of Cameron's low state, in lecture and left on the moment. He did not wait to go to his room but had a check cashed in the business office and dashed across the

campus, catching the train at the next street, just as it was leaving.

At home they had not expected him on the first train and there was no one at the station to meet him. It was night. He rushed to the nearest livery stable and beat on the doors. He pushed by the stupid, blinking man that answered, found and saddled a riding horse and, flinging the price to the astonished man dashed out into the darkness.

The horse was dripping lather when he flung himself from the saddle at the dimly lighted entrance of his home. He threw the reins over the porch post and dashed up the steps. There was no light in the hall below, nor sign of activity and Duncan, with despairing heart, divined that all the life and light of the place was centered tonight, as always, with his father, in the room where he lay. His trembling legs carried him up the s airs that seemed endless. At the top he turned to his father's room where the light made a path down the long hall for his stumbling feet. He was panting as though he had run, rather than ridden the last miles; he reached the door.

The room was full of people—his mother, Morton and his wife, the help. Beyond was the bed and before it the doctor rose from bending over the form upon it.

"It is all over!" he said, and reached for his hat. At the door he stumbled over Duncan. The boy had fainted across the threshold.

CHAPTER FIVE

Duncan strode across the station platform to the familiar machine in waiting. He shook hands with the boy, grinning amiable welcome at the wheel, and thrust his suitcase into the back of the car. He went back to the baggage room and helped the men carry his light trunk to the automobile. Then he climbed into the seat behind the wheel, involuntarily vacated by the boy, and started the machine.

Duncan was back from college. He came not with blare of trumpets; neither with the ordinary air and trappings which proclaim the newly fledged. Duncan was not, in fact, a college man. He was a man who had been to college. He was twenty-six years old. He had not taken college jocularly. He had taken it on the installment plan. It had taken him six years to do it. Duncan was glad to get through. He had gone to college for the sole purpose of doing what he was doing at the present moment: getting hold of the wheel again—the wheel of his family industry.

He had had a longer go at the last part of his college course than at the first. He had finished his junior year at the State University and gone from there to Yale the following term without the break that had occurred between his freshman and his sophomore, and his sophomore and junior years. He had cut the last summer short, too, leaving early for the east in the interests of the wine men, to put in some work at Washington with others from his home state in an effort to block the Pomerene bill, the measure aimed at the very life of the California wine industry. It had been a great experience, rubbing elbows with the biggest men of the country; pitting his untried powers of logic and persuasion against the minds of experienced politicians and legislators from all over the land. Best of all,

it had been a work that won. But it was time he could little afford to spare. He was especially anxious to get home because of his unbroken year. His summers and holidays, and the years between, he had spent as before, a hand on his own vineyard. He had not taken over the management from Morton; it seemed best that way till he was back for good. Several seasons he had been employed at various wineries as field or inside manager. He helped with the expenses of the place that way, or his services met the payments on borrowed money. Now he was back for good and he was glad.

Duncan had necessarily been a "dig" at college and thereby he carried off honors in the majority of his classes. In his home university he had also another and more important distinction. He was the best half back the 'varsity had ever had. He played one season, and gave it up because he couldn't afford to break his neck, or any part of his anatomy that would lay him up and cost him a doctor's bill. As the 'varsity's best "half" he was correspondingly popular. He was worshipped by the men and ogled by the girls and made much of after the manner of a college hero, but as well hang garlands on a buffalo as laurels on Duncan, as well rest a halo on the head of a busy blacksmith. Duncan was not made for wearing either garlands or halos. Neither knew he "college spirit," so called.

Duncan was glad to get back. He had been needed every day he was gone. Morton had been unaccountably going to pieces, everything was at loose ends and he would have his hands full. It was a good day to begin. Steering with one hand he drew off his coat and threw it behind him in the car and squared his shoulders to the spring sun. It felt good to his flesh after the clammy air and stoop of the class rooms.

"What's to get?" he asked the boy, falling into the colloquialisms he had never abandoned. There were groceries and a

hundred yards of fence wire to get and some new pruning shears to be called for at Brook's. Probably Morton had ordered the wrong kind. He generally did nowadays. They drove to Brook's. Yes, they were the wrong kind. Duncan changed the order. He was glad he had gotten back in time for the pruning shears.

At Brook's he was going out of the door when the manager came out of his office and hailed him: "Hey there, stranger! Ain't you going to give your friends a chance to say hello? Mighty glad to see you—didn't know you were back."

Duncan flushed with surprise. In a business way Brooke had always been a good enough friend, but his effusiveness was unusual.

"That was great work you did for us down at Washington," continued Brooks. Congratulations, and we're glad you're back!" Duncan thanked him and hurried on. He was anxious to get out to the vineyard. As he was getting into the machine, a hand was clapped on his arm and Mr. Blythe, of Blythe & Co., wholesale dealers, hailed him.

"Well, hello, boy! When did you get in? Back for good aren't you? Say, right here I want to register my own personal appreciation of your work for us last summer. I meant to have written to you but just didn't that 's all. If any apology will do, though, I may say I dictated that letter the Association sent you and I meant every word of it. Your work was great —you and your colleagues—and simply saved the California wine industry—that's all. And we've got something right now for you to do if you can give us your time—we'll see you are well paid for it. That's to lead us in the fight against the Drys this summer. We've got to beat that amendment and we can all right if we get in and work but we've got to do *that*. Some of our folks don't think the prohibitionist have got much strength in the state but they're mistaken. The Anti-saloon

people—Gandier and his crowd—have been doing a lot of work. You hav'n't any idea unless you have been watching the thing how much dry territory there is in this state, right now. Of course, though, there are a lot of folks who don't want a saloon next door to them or in their town, that would buck the proposition of a dry state and the destruction of one of California's biggest ndustries There's threat enough however, to behoove us to get busy—and *mighty* busy."

"What are your plans?" asked Duncan, who was at all times practical.

"Why the Royal Arch people will get in their work of course with all the resources they have got at their backs, but we wine people have to get into the fight. The fact is, we're the ones to swing it. Say—just step inside the Palace here where we can have something and talk it over—got time?"

"Well say, really, Mr. Blythe, I've just gotten in, and I *am* in a hurry to get home—been away a year you know, pretty near. How'd to-morrow do for this?"

"That's all right, that's all right. To-morrow is just as good. Make it to-morrow, at my office. We've got something else up our sleeves for you, too. Tell you to-morrow. Good-by."

To his surprise and embarrassment, Duncan's course up the street was beset with numerous similar encounters. Men he had had but a slight acquaintance with before, men of affairs and business, met him with cordiality, going out of their way to stop and speak to him. Women whom he knew, with due deference, as high in social and club circles, smiled and bowed with unwonted graciousness. He was possessed of real amazement, some embarrassed pleasure, and a good deal of impatience. He wanted to get home. In front of the Journal office when he stopped the machine to go into a supply shop next door, Norris, the cub reporter, laid violent hands on him and dragged him

demurring into the news room, where he was immediately surrounded by a bunch of hungry reporters.

"*Well*—what do you know about this? Look who's here!"

"Welcome—welcome to our lovely city!"

"Welcome home, old man, and here's the glad hand! You mutt, you—you carry your laurels modestly, that's sure. Why didn't you let us know you were coming? We'd of had a proper reception ready for you—bunting and brass bands and other fir works."

They grinned at him—McWhirter, the city editor, "Pop" Winston of the Exchanges, the sporting editor and Hayward, while Norris capered about the group like a delighted terrier. It was something to pick up a scoop like this, even if instinct prompted to turn it over to his betters.

"Sit right down here and tell us something!" ordered McWhirter, pushing him into a chair. "Hayward, you take it!"

Duncan flushed up to his hair roots like a girl, and stammered in confusion: "What? Aw—go on! I don't know anything. I have'n't anything to say!"

"Pshaw! You're too modest. Go ahead—just a word! What you think of he lobbying game—the prospects of the Dry campaign—what's the wine crop prospects this year?—anything!"

But he shook them off and bolted for the door. On the steps he turned back with compunction, to Norris, still at his heels with reproachful eyes.

"You can say I'm back—just got through. I'm going back to the vineyard. The fight was won this spring through—through—the presentation of facts and the common sense of

the legislators. The same arguments will maintain the industry against the attacks of the prohibition cranks. That's all." He dashed up the street. Norris turned back with a self satisfied grin. He had landed the scoop himself after all and a moment later he was pounding off Duncan's brief statement with logical elaboration.

CHAPTER SIX

Duncan finished his last errand with expedition. He was annoyed at the incident, that he had allowed himself to "talk for publication". He had made a fool of himself out of sympathy for little Norris. There were a lot of things he might have said and said better, if he had to say anything.

He tortured himself as much as two minutes with a self consciousness of a man who has never known self consciousness before, and then shook it off with a motion of his broad shoulders. He strode out to the car and headed homeward, but half a block down the street he wheeled back suddenly.

"One more thing—Gosh! I nearly forgot Garrison's little sister." He swung into a cross street and searched along slowly, scanning the business houses until he came to an ostentatious new refreshment shop. Then he drew up, stopped and turned off the engine. He threw a coin to the boy:

"You can put in a half hour or so as you like while I'm gone." He turned to the shop. He was going to inquire for Garrison's little sister.

Garrison was the only close friend Duncan had made during his college life. He was his room-mate at Yale. Garrison's college course had been pursued much as had been Duncan's. It has been the precariousness of their educational efforts that had drawn them together. Garrison, like Duncan, was "perpetually broke" and the same impulses lent them self denial in the lighter things of University life. Garrison was a soloist in the college glee club. In fact, it was the circumstance of his leaving unexpectedly with the club on the annual European trip, that elected Duncan his little sister's guardian for the summer. He had intended to come west himself and look after her.

Another day Duncan would have sought Glad with pleasure.

He had met her in several week-end visits with Garrison at their h me, or rather, the home of a distant and not wholly compatible relative with whom they lived. The two were orphans.

Glad was the creature of her own name. Duncan had never imagined so exquisite a wisp of a child-woman; such joy o' life as was conserved in her radiant little being. She was like a rainbow—a bubble—a vagrant breeze—a flower of the morning's blossoming: anything new and fresh and vibrant She filled the house with the warmth and joy of a spring day. Her first awe of Duncan had been great, but it had soon disappeared and the happiest of comradships had been substituted. She received him into her regard on an equality with a brother. A jo ly little pal of both, she lavished on each alike the adorable caresses of her impulsive little heart. He could feel yet, her frank child kisses. They effected him strangely. Caresses had been few in his life. They were like the remembered pressure of his baby : ister's lips, soft and round and innocent.

She was a little country girl—Glad—w th the innocence of a child and the half allurements of a woman. Already her new coquetries found place in her home-made dresses in which she betrayed the skill of some thrifty country-woman and the taste and style of some lady of fashion and feeling in her ancestry. Somewhere, too, she drew the independence that shortly sugested the daring enterprise which had brought her to California, namely, the earning of her own living. Neighbors were going west to Riverdale. She had not been quite well the past winter—a slight cough that gave her brother anxiety. There were all sorts of opportunities in California for health getting and wealth getting. Glad would go and encompass both, at least the roses in her cheeks again, and independence of the relative whose authority she resisted. Glad went to California. Friends of her friends found her a position in the sweetshop

which Duncan now sought. The friends themselves, disappointed with California, turned back home, but Glad stayed. She was making six dollars a month over expenses—a vast sum. She was sometimes lonesome, for the friends-of-the-friends had their own interests and their cordiality waned after the latter left. But Garrison would be here in the summer and in the meantime Glad was making new friends.

Duncan turned into the door under the sign of "Inglenook", the town's newest refreshment place, boasting metropolitan smartness and the prettiest girls in town. He blinked in the artificial twilight of the p ace and was aware of a clammy atmosphere, clammy ordors and white gowned waitresses moving in a dim vista. He asked a smart looking girl in earrings and a low cut blouse behind the candy coun'er, for Miss Garrison. The girl repeated the name vaguely and said the e was no one there by that name.

"She 's ashier here," Duncan helped.

"That's a mistake," retorted the earringed one with some resentment, " 'cause I'm cashier. She must be some one that's gone. J' want to see th' proprietor?"

Duncan did. The proprietor came languidly from his cage-like office.

"I wanted to see Miss Garrison," said Duncan "I'm told she is'n't here any more."

"Right! drawled the proprietor, "She isn't."

"Can you tell me where she is?" asked Duncan.

The proprietor laughed amusedly: "Heaven knows—I don't. Gone the way of all th' 'Chickens', I reckon—the pretty ones. The ugly ones are the only ones we can keep," he added resentfully.

Duncan shrugged his shoulders in disgust: "Well, I guess we're talking about different parties," he said. "I expect I've

got the wrong address. I didn't have it with me but thought this was it." He turned to go. The man called after him.

"Wait! Come back. Its all right. You want to see Glad Garrison, the little eastern girl? Well, she was here, I tell you—was here till six weeks ago. Was my last cashier before this one," indicating her of the earrings. "But I tell you she's gone. Gone to the devil like most of 'em do when they're beauties like her—by the cocktail and joy-ride route. Probably she's across the tracks by now. You wer'n't particularly interested?"

Duncan's head whirled and the place went dark and remote. It was not bodily faintness but mental swoon. His hand gripped the counter.

"You don't mean what you say! It's a mistake. It must be. This one is'n't that kind. She was the sweetest, most innocent little thing ever was—a little country girl. She's absolutely good I tell you. Absolutely." The man laughed:

"Why, maybe so. Well, I guess you don't know women. But you ought to—you're no kid yourself." He inspected Duncan with some contempt. "It's the absolutely all right little country girls that make the best Chickens. Barn yard raised—y' know. They're fresher an' cuter then the town kind. And she *was* a cute little cuss," he laughed reminiscently, "different from the rest and more taking. I liked her." Duncan stopped him with a look. He could have taken the man by the throat.

"Who was responsible?" he choked out. The man laughed derisively.

"Search me! There were several of 'em it might have been. She had lots of company. The pretty ones always have." Duncan, however, was no longer listening: It was she, then, Garrison's little sister.

"For God's sake!" he cried aloud, "Why didn't you do some-

thing about it—why didn't you stop it? Why, she was just a child! They can't let a child have cocktails—they can't sell liquor to minors. Why didn't you get the officers onto him?"

"Oh—*pshaw*. What are you talking about. They can sell anything to anybody at those cafes. It's all the go down at 'Charley's' or 'The Parisian'—that new place. A table at one of the dansants, a cocktail or two and a joy-ride, and it s all over. Easy enough when they *aint* bad."

"But *you*"—pressed Duncan. "You're a man—a father, maybe. Why did'n't you advise her—try and get her to see—stop her?" The manager laughed derisively.

"Oh Lord, man. We aint running a rescue home here. We're running a sweet shop."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Duncan had the girl's boarding address and sought her there. He had little hopes of finding her but it occurred to him he might be able to get some clue to her.

He found the house. It was a shabby boarding plac in a grassless yard. The exterior wanted paint and the interior soap and water. The landlady, in a dirty kimona and curl papers, eyed him curiously as he lifted his hat at the door. "Does Glad Garrison live here?" Is she in?" The woman was immediately interested.

"Yes, she's here. Who are you, relative?" Duncan instinctively answered, "Yes".

"Well, she won't see you but I'm glad you've come. Come in." she led the way into a parlor having a cellar-like air and raised a shade to show him a seat.

"I knowed you must be a relative or friend, and a right sort," she said, inspecting him leisurely. "I could tell by your looks." Duncan ignored the compliment. "You know about it?" She asked with mean'ng and some embarrassment, avoiding his eyes.

"Yes," his heart stood still as he said it. "How is she?"

"She's sick—awful sick. At least she has been. She tried to do away with *it* you know." The woman grew suddenly bold, speaking with the relish of vulgar minds. 'She didn't make it though. She's young, and it was the first time and all." Duncan shrank from her odious insinuations.

"So she's in for it—'less something happens, and I should think it would, the way she takes on. I'm mighty glad you come. I'm at my wits end. I can't have her 'round much longer, and she don't know no more what to do than a baby."

Duncan drew back in the shadow of the room nauseated by the woman's increasing intimacy and loathsome loquaciousness.

"Course she's got money. She's paid right up and could stay on—" Duncan interrupted hoarsely:

"You don't mean she's become a—a common—?"

"Oh, bless your life no. That's the trouble. She aint that kind—or was'n't. That's the reason she takes it so serious. If she didn't she'd get rid of it reg'lar, at th' doctors and take up with some offer across the track. It's too bad but its the only way for girls when they get in bad once—"

"Let me see her," said Duncan, coldly.

"Well, we can try, but she won't come down here. Maybe she'll let you in, though, if we kind of surprise her." The woman led the way up stairs to a back bed-room. She knocked. There was no answer and she opened the door.

Glad was sleeping but there was no repose in her sleep. Her disordered hair lay across the soiled pillow-case. She lay upon her face, her head straining against the pillow as against iron bars. The hand that lay on the bed-covering was clenched. From the delicate profile every childish curve and dimple had fled and the lines, sharp and strained, expressed even in her sleep an agony of mental suffering. Every vestige of former freshness was gone from her fair skin. Even her hair had lost its brightness. She was a creature out of which the radiance had burnt as from a light behind an ornate shade, leaving a ghas liness which indicated not only physical decadency but spiritual decay. All her misery spoke in her abandoned and unconscious form. It was a revelation complete and overwhelming.

Duncan was faint with the sight. With the ghastliness of the change. Once, when walking home along the vineyard rows he had stopped to listen to a mocking bird, unseen in a eucalyptus tree above his head. The exultant notes came

falling down from the little singer's throat like drops of crystal clear water, when suddenly a shot broke off the melody and the little singer plunged downward with his song and fell limp and dead at Duncan's feet. Duncan stooped and picked up the little body, still vibrating with the last ineffable note and pressed it in an agony to his bosom and his throat hurt—like *this*.

Duncan looked at the spectacle before him and his throat burned with a deadly hurt. "And *this* by the beastliness of man—the brute greed that 'refuses nothing of life' for himself.' " To have the man that did this thing, by the throat—between his two strong hands—so!

Glad stirred and with a long sigh that was a sob she took hold on consciousness. She sat up slowly pushing her disordered hair from her forehead. Her senses took hold of life again and of its misery. Her head dropped in her hands and a long shivering shook her body. Duncan could not bear it no longer. "Glad."

She started up w th a look of amazement—"Duncan." Her cry was one of peculiar and never to be forgotten pain. She snatched the coverlets to her and burrowed back into the pillows like a wild thing. Duncan reached the bed with a stride and sat down on its edge. He drew the girl to him with an overwhelming tenderness.

"Glad, you are not afraid of me are you? You are glad to see me?"

"Oh, no, no. Go away!, go away!. Don't touch me! My God, didn't they tell you?" She fell into terrible sobbing, beating her forehead with her clenched fists.

"There" exclaimed the landlady, "I told you—she goes on just like that—something fierce. Well its going to make things just as bad as can be for her, and *It* too." Duncan signed for the woman to leave them.

"Oh, my God! Oh, my God! What am I going to do? It was bad enough before but now you've come and found me and you'll tell him. You mustn't tell him. Promise you wont tell him—Oh, why did you come?" She fell into a paroxysm of weeping again.

"Listen, to me, Glad." Duncan had often taken wild little things into his hands and his strength and gentleness had quieted them. Glad ceased to cry and sat looking at him with wet and despairing eyes. "I wont tell him," Duncan said. "Garrison shall not know. He shall never know—not now—not till you like. But you must calm yourself and we must think." It came to him suddenly, the stupendousness of the problem that faced him, and its ironical novelty, but he spoke with assurance. "I came because Hugh wanted me to look you up. He never dreamed—he has left for Europe—he sent the telegram and you answered it, you know."

"Yes, and I was glad—I wanted him to go, and never know, and when he came back I would be—dead, or not here or something—" she shuddered.

"You must not talk that way," he said. Involuntarily his hand smoothed back her disordered hair. It's caress filled her with new agony. "Ah, you must no be kind to me—I'm so bad. And yet—I'm *not* bad! Oh, no, truly I was not. You knew I wasn't when I was home with you and Hugh. I was all right then—tell me you know I was good." Her face was again a little girl's. He kissed her with involuntary tenderness as he would a hurt child. "God knows you were." he said.

"Ah," she drew a long relieving sigh. "And I was good here. I never meant any harm when they'd come in and talk and jolly. I was lonesome and they were kind. I wanted some fun and they gave it to me—shows and automob le rides and those things, like I never had before. I liked to dress up and have

them tell me I was pretty. Oh, it was silly, I know, but I didn't mean any harm.

"And some of them were just boys. There was one—such a *nice* boy." Her eyes filled strangely, "and he liked me. He worked in the newspaper office, and he liked me but he kissed me once and it made me mad. I was like that, you know—I wasn't bad.

"But some of them were grown men, and it made me proud that they should like me. This one was a man—" she paused and shuddered, "He was the oldest and handsomest, and I went with him because the rest of the girls said he was a swell catch and were jealous. And he seemed the safest of all—he never tried to kiss me, but once, and then he said he liked me because I wouldn't let him.

"But one night we went to The Parisian after midnight. I didn't want to go but there was a crowd of us and they dared me. I didn't mean to go *then*, but he said to be game and that he'd take care of me.

"And so we went. There was dinner with dancing between—you know. It was jolly. And they had cocktails. I didn't want to take any but they said I wasn't a sport. He said I *was* a sport—he always stood up for me—so I had to have some. And then we had some more and then some more, and I forgot where I was and what I was doing, and everything seemed changed and everything seemed right—and—and—" She buried her face in her hands—turning from him. "I don't know the rest!

"Oh!" she cried suddenly, flinging her hands from her eyes and staring at him with rigid face. "You must believe that! You *must believe that*—that I didn't know! It was the *wine* that did it—do you hear? The wine! And he meant that it should—he meant it, all the time. Oh!" there was a world of hatred in her quick-caught breath.

"Its an awful thing to forget what's right. Its an awful thing for anybody to take away your *knowing* what's right." She said the words and repeated them like a memorization burned into her brain by continuous repetition, her eyes half closed, her body held rigidly as resisting physical pain. She continued, her shyness, her sense of modesty that normally would have hampered her thoughts, were lost, inhibited by her passion for relief and vindication.

"I never s w him again. He went away that night. Afterward I remembered that he was to go away that night. And I don't know where he is, or where he was going. I never thought to ask, somehow."

She sat on the edge of the bed, her chin in her hands; her head aslant, crouchingly, like an animal which has been struck and cowed, and her attitude was, to Duncan, a painful sign of the tragic change in her, the dethroning of the human

"When I knew, I tried to kill *It*," she whispered, "but *It* wouldn't die—*It* won't die. I know *It* won't. I can see *It's* eyes now. And they ask *'How it came to be_'* They always ask, *'How it came to be'*."

She shrank from her self, her eyes dilating, her hands pushing as though to dislodge hands clinging to her; pressing as if to hide the face looking into her's; clutching, tearing as though to cast out the horror within her body. It was fearful—terrible—more frightful than anything Duncan had ever dreamed. And beside this vision of the distraught and grovelling woman, was the picture of Glad, the child—the free and joyous creature he had known. The contrast was unspeakable.

She was rocking hysterically now and wringing her hands. "Oh, God! What shall I do? What *shall* I do?"

"*It* will go on living. *It* will be a child and *It* will hate me, and a woman and *It* will despise me! All will despise me and it will be because he did it. Because he made me *forget*—Oh,

God—Oh, God! She paused suddenly. A paroxysm siezed her—the paroxysm of hysteria—and brought her to her feet, rigid, eyes fixed and terrible. Then the reaction came—she drooped and reeled and Duncan, calling sharply for the landlady, caught her and laid her gently on the bed.

Outside the door, when the fainting fit had passed, he gave brief orders. "She must have physical attention. Call Dr. Elliot—here—Black 157. Do what he advises for her—the hospital or whatever he says. I will see him about the bills. Tell her not to worry—not to think—I'll tell nothing, and I will see her tomorrow."

At the gate he met a girl in ostentatious dress—the low-cut blouse and high heels, the high slit skirt and bold eyes of the many familiar to him as a part of the streets, like the theater signs, the newsboy or the eternal blind man at the street corner. She paused in insolent pose, classifying him, appraising him, from under the low brim of her hat. She was young, she was beautiful with the beauty of the perfect female species newly arrived at sex perfection. Every asset of physical charm was enhanced by the cunning disclosures of her filmy dress.

"Hello, kid." The gate was wide and he stood aside to let her pass, but she lingered. Her voice was like a purr. "Been to see the country kid? How is she today?" Duncan looked at her.

"She's not here," he lied.

"Oh, well then—" She pushed her face insolently up into his. "You needn't be so—*so*," she mocked, with exaggerated dignity. "You're a good boy, ain't you? I reckon you're her brother? Yes?" There was interrogation in her voice.

"Yes," lied Duncan. He passed on and heard her low mocking laugh, as she looked after him.

"Well, good bye—kid." He shuddered. Glad might have been like this, might be yet—this was one of her friends. He had lied involuntarily, instinctively, as when danger threatens. He was glad he had done it. He must save the girl from this later fate.

CHAPTER VIII

Duncan drove home in a revery that took no note of things external. Ordinarily he would have seen everything, noted everything in the familiar landscape—the growth of the vineyards, the new ones set out during his absence, and the improvements in the old; the new buildings and equipment that spoke of the growing prosperity of his thrifty neighbors and the increasing evidence of neglect in the land of the neighbor of easy theories. He would have gleaned as much information of the home vineyard and the history of the past year's business as the boy at his side could give him and would have been able to launch into the business of the place with Morton, the foreman, on reaching home, almost as if he had never been away. The flattering incidents of his reception by the wine men and his other friends were such that even his slow egotism would have been stirred to gratification and some wonder if it had not been for the vivid impressions induced by the incident involving Garrison's little sister and which inhibited for the present all other ideas. The facts were hideous and cut a path across the normal trend of Duncan's thoughts—new, startling and confusing.

Duncan had never philosophized concerning men and life. From a child his dealings had been with the practical. He had no time for dreameries and the world had emerged into his consciousness ready-made. Moral concern for himself or others had never been a part of his consideration. He was aware of the existence of good men and bad men, of good women and bad women, but these things belonged wholly to the established regime of the universe, with which he had nothing whatever to do. Any attempt to change the order, the hysterical concern of certain people, societies and sects, in the private

affairs of the individual, he treated with contempt as an evidence of bad taste.

His religious ideas were wholly abstract and unemotional and were expressed in the form of the High Church of which his father's family were members. He never had known the spiritual sensitiveness common to many at adolescence. He had not inherited soul struggle from either parent. To an unusual degree he had escaped the enlarging influences of the new altruism, the passion for social service and the broad outlook fostered in many of the departments of study and the numerous societies, religious and social, of the university. His course of study had embraced none of the former and his prejudices kept him from participation in the latter. The very meagerness of his college life the ignoring of the social and fraternal side; the painful application to the object in hand to the exclusion of the larger life and spirit of the school which is half, perhaps two-thirds, of the value of the university, was due to his devotion to his life object. That object was his father's ambition for La Mesa Vineyard.

He, who had had little consciousness of personal responsibility, was now choked by the catastrophe into a fury of accusation against the causes that permitted such an outrage. He raged impotently like one striking out in the dark: "How could this thing be in a town of decent men and women, a place of churches and charities and societies that pretend to keep things moving along decent lines? For, that the girl was guiltless of blame for her fate, he doubted not for a moment; her emotions were too sincere, the agony of her reflections too genuine. Some slight indiscretions, the result of her inexperience and her impulsive, affectionate nature, might have been hers, but she had the instinct of self-preservation which belongs to the girl of right breeding. In a moment such as

that with the lad she described, her coquetry had vanished and resentment of a liberty emerged involuntarily.

He wondered vaguely who the offender was, and Norris' handsome, roguish face, with its expression of fun and gallantry, emerged. Norris—it was no doubt, Norris. Trust him to know where the prettiest girls were to be found. Norris—who had all the innocent girl-lust of a splendidly normal lad; the instinct of the male of all species, to bedazzle and subjugate, whether by a superior spread of tail-feathers, or a new Palm Beach suit of overwhelming smartness. And she, poor little fool, afraid before his boyish and innocent fervor had turned away from the boy, whose impulses were as clean as his linen to the protection of this beast who looked like a man. The irony of it!

It was worse than that. This brute had done more than blight innocence and invoke a life—he had accomplished the forced birth of a *soul*. Duncan saw it all: Glad, a child yesterday, today looked upon the world with the eyes of a woman and found it hideous. Ah—the villainy of it! A birth that should have been an ineffable dawn, all the sweet emotions, the uninterpreted impulses, the vague wonderings and desires; the whispering promises of a girl's life moving by normal laws of being into that of a woman—all this beauty and glory torn away and realities interpreted in terms of brutishness; maternity, God help her, the crowning glory of her woman's life, a hideous compulsion, it's sweet and sacred meaning a shattered thing. He thought of life conceived in such brutishness. What must it be other than the horror Glad's terrified eyes perceived?

In his fury was united tenderness for the girl, his own outraged sensibilities and the responsibility he felt himself charged with by Garrison. He would find this man and bring him to punishment. He would investigate the Parisian. He had

learned of the cafe. Rumors had reached him the year before from visiting boys of the growing notoriety of the place, of its flaunted Bohemianism. To visit the Parisian was a night's adventure. He had heard the stories of their larks with the disgust he felt for such things; things for which he felt neither sympathy or craving.

It was just such excesses and evils, he thought, that provided the material for the Dry agitation. However unassignable to the honest forms of the industry such things might be, it behooved the liquor people to stand responsible for the same to the extent of making investigation and providing regulations that would eliminate the evils.

For the first time he pondered the moral order of things. There were good men and bad men good women and bad women. But the bad had power over the good. Glad's solemn enunciation of her new convictions repeated itself in his mind: "It's an awful thing to forget what's right! It's an awful thing for anyone to take away one's knowing what is right!"

Suddenly upon his own new sensibilities flashed, with staggering vividness the frailty of volition, the precariousness of it: volition, controlling conduct and choices; volition, governed in that conduct and choice by judgement, by conclusions, the maturest fruit of experience, the instincts of ancestry, surviving to guide the man or woman into the ways that make for their welfare and happiness; this volition so perilously poised; the scale of choice changed by mere accident, more, by the volition of another

Here was Glad the child fortified by clean ancestry and clean instinct against direct attack. But the designs of a brute mind had swept the fabric of moral protection away in a moment; had substituted another will and impulse, provided by the transforming power of the wine. This frightful change,

with all its future train of suffering, in a pure and lovely girl! There was need of preaching! There was need of teaching and legislation!—need? God! How many other crimes and miseries, in how many other ways, were being worked every day by men and women of evil design? And he had thought all his days that goodness was a stable thing, established and unassailable, and agitating an unbecoming and unnecessary activity. Instead, it was assailed powerfully, and every day, by Evil with deadly intent against its foundation.

Duncan had heard the jeering materialist say that all forms of morality and virtue were but instincts of self-preservation. Well, he was willing to accept the definition. And normally, men and women took that way—*normal* men and women took that way. But since abnormal men and women—men and women ignorant, immoral and vicious—in their ignorance and viciousness assailed that way, it must be guarded. He saw it! He saw it as though at its first unveiling. The conception of all moral effort *It was effort for the preservation of life.*

Well then, such interests were not the petty and uncalled-for thing he had regarded them and the preacher and the teacher and the reformer, active at their business, were not cranks and interferers in other people's business. Why, it was the logical business of all men, who themselves desired to live, to engage in that business; not just the few; to co operate in the business of making the world a safe and wholesome place for individuals and humanity.

Why did men organize in the material realm—the wine-growers, the orange-growers, the business men?—for material benefit, for protection and development of their interests? And if co-operation—attentive, intelligent co-operation—was useful on the material plane, how much more so in the moral world, the power-house from which run all the determining wires of men's conduct and intercourse.

And yet men made light of this department of life; deprecated, ignored it as though it touched them not at all; men, like himself, with brawn and muscle and practical common sense, left the business of morality and religion to women and ministers and spineless young men. If *his* fist had been in such efforts in this town, Glad would not now be the abandoned, pathetic creature she was. He would *have* his fist in it henceforth. He had been narrow in his views and mode of life; he had made his ideals—the fulfillment of his father's ambitions—narrow; constructed them in little terms. He would live more in touch with his fellows—that was what his father had done—so he could feel their need.

Duncan had seen a light. There was no outward transformation in him; the same self-contained, reserved man sat behind the wheel of his machine guiding the car over the not too smooth roads with consumate, subconscious skill, his pipe gripped between his teeth. The vision he had caught was one of those phenomena of the inner mind, an illumination in the far recesses of the soul that flashes up suddenly like a lighted match in a dark room, like lightning on a landscape, out in an instant, but in that brief moment revealing spiritual realities and showing the way.

Duncan was at La Mesa Vineyard and with a turn of the wheel, spun the machine into the circular driveway and stopped at the door of his home.

CHAPTER NINE

Duncan's mother had heard the sound of the car and was waiting for him on the veranda. The Scotch are not demonstrative in their greetings, besides, at such times, with Jeanie and herson, beloved vanished forms stood in the shadowy background and the thoughts of both were too poignant for words.

While Duncan ate a belated supper, Jeanie detailed the news of the place. There were eight months to be covered, for Jeanie did not write letters readily, and only the affairs absolutely necessitating Duncan's attention were recited in her brief missives.

Jeanie spoke still with the broad Scotch of her father's family. It was a circumstance indicative of her native inadaptability and hampered development. She never had had but the most formal acquaintance with her husband's friends. Her associations had been almost wholly confined to the members of her family and the visitors the house had scarcely ever been without, in Cameron's day—Scotch people, who made a temporary home with the family while looking about them to locate. Not a few of these were from her own village; lads who worked for a time for Douglas before starting out for themselves; and fresh-faced young Scotch lassies, lured to the "land of promise," who were wont to help Jeanie with her domestic duties while they made their home with her. In this way the old associations and the characteristics of speech which, with the middle class Scotch amount almost to a tongue, were kept up in the Cameron home, the older Douglas frequently saying facetiously that he was the only member of his household who spoke English.

During Duncan's absence, since she had been much alone, Jeanie had reverted in a strange degree to the ways of her own

family; Duncan noticed it at once, in her speech, in her dress, in many little mannerisms. It struck him as pathetic and reproachful. He must make up to his mother for these years of loneliness—these years during which gray hairs and age had begun to creep upon her.

The concern of most consequence that occupied the attention of the two tonight was Morton. Duncan had thought to retain his manager until the next grape crop was harvested at least, but Morton's growing inefficiency threatened the necessity of his discharge.

"This affair of Morton's makes me sick," said Duncan, as they sought the coolness of the veranda after supper, where the latter smoked while Jeanie employed herself on her endless needle-work.

"I'd rather do most anything than be forced to fire him, but from just the little I got from the boy about recent affairs on the vineyard and what you've said, Morton has made a dozen foolish moves within the past few weeks and we can't stand it. How long has it been tanking up like this?"

"Oh, come a year and a half noo, y'e ken he was fair daft a half a dozen times wi the booze last simmer when ye were hame before, after he come back frae the city."

"I know, but that's rather to be looked for—the celebration of his freedom from a year's responsibility. I didn't like to see it, but it's the way with a lot of men, and I thought when he got back on the job he'd settle down and put away his nonsense."

"Weel, he didna. An' it's been a sair year for Elsie and the bairns—a nither on the w'y too. An' though she says naething, I'm thinking she's been sair pit to, to keep the house goin' an' the bairns clothed. An' in her foolish woman's way she bears it against us. She's got the thocht of some of the prohibeetionists and says we who raise the grapes are responsible

for her mon's habits. But it's juist the hurt o' her ain sorrow, puir lassie, an' I think naething o' it."

Duncan made a jesture of impatience and distress. Elsie had been a member of their household for years. She was married to Morton in the family parlor. He had never been able to take the misguided accusations of men and women against his business, with the indifference of his father. Scorning them as the product of distorted reasoning yet they hurt him for they came not infrequently from those whose esteem he prized.

"It's Elsie I'm thinking of more than Morton in this matter," he said. "I can't bear to turn him off on her account and the children's. I'll talk the matter over with him; perhaps we can help him brace up. I need him and he needs the place. By the way, where does he get the stuff? I'll go and see that they refuse him. That s one of the new and excellent saloon regulations—to refuse to sell to a man who is drunk, or is getting the habit. If the saloons would keep to these regulations they'd better themselves and restore the institution to its former place of respect in the community. Confound it! They've got to, or they're going to be put out of business, and rightly so."

"Yes, I ha' nae doot, but Morton gets his drink in town when he goes there—Elsie says, as the head o' th' vineyard an' your substitute, he's gettin' in wi' the business and social eelement"—Duncan shrugged his shoulders—"an' has to drink mair for sociabeelity sake than former, but since he has taken to it steady he gets maist o' it frae the winery here. It's easy o' access, and they don't refuse onyone. It's no been gude frae the men, especially the help," added Jeanie with uneasiness. "In fact," she hesitated, "I ha' something to tell ye that I'd rather no', or wish was already told. I didna write ye because it was near yir last week an' I knew

ye'd be engaged wi' ye're examinations an' shouldna be distairbed."

"What is it?" asked Duncan, with unconscious sternness. He took his pipe from his mouth and knocking out the ashes, waited. Jeanie flushed, there was rebuke in his manner.

"Weel, Antonio is in sai trouble. It's been ain o' the troubles o' the place—Morton's supplanting the former help wi' cheap labor, th' Hindoos an' other riff-raff he could pick up." She hurried on, admonished by Duncan's sober and uncommunicative face

"There's been bad bluid between the Mexicans an' the new men. A lot mair drinkin' amang 'em all than formerly, an'—" she paused.

"Well?" said Duncan.

"Weel, I can scarce tell ye—maybe I ocht to ha' written ye."

"Never mind—go on."

"Weel, there was a cuttin' scrape when they was drunk. Antonio stabbed ain o' the Hindoos to death an' is in the county jail charged wi' manslaughter."

Duncan started and the pipe dropped from his fingers. The blood surged to his face and back, leaving it white, but he said nothing for a moment. It was a hard moment for his mother.

"Yes, you should have wired me at once. I would have come home. I might have saved him. Antonio! Ortega's son, and as fine a man as I ever knew This is awful—we must save him."

"I'm afeered it will do nae gude," suggested his mother, timidly. Duncan ignored the remark.

"Antonio a murderer, and another argument for the prohibition cranks to flay us with! Curse Morton! I told him not to hire trash! Curse the winery! I never liked Bernardi-

ni, any way. I'll see him about this tomorrow. I won't stand for this sort of thing."

"Bernardini will gie us twelve dollars a ton for the second crop this year—mair than we've got for ten year back," interposed his mother anxiously.

"I don't care if he will. I don't want his money. I'm going in now to see if I can get hold of Attorney Cliffe, or any of them, and see what we can do for Antonio." He strode into the house and Jeanie heard him worrying the telephone. He could get hold of no one and came back in disgust.

"Well I suppose it doesn't make any difference tonight, but I'll go in first thing in the morning. You say he has had a preliminary hearing and his case is to be called soon?"

"No, I didna say that," said Jeanie, in some bewilderment at being credited with such technical knowledge, "I said he'd been charged wi' manslaughter but they're no done wi' him yet an' he's bidin' noo in the jail." Duncan smiled inwardly in spite of the situation, at his mother's ingenuousness. Perhaps he had been hard on her but she should have let him know his presence might have made a vital amount of difference. He would hire the best lawyer he could lay hold of now—Cliffe or Kennedy—for Antonio's defense. All the old associations, his boyhood friendship with Antonio, the latter's faithfulness as an emp'oyee; most of all, the devotion of Antonio's father, Ortega, to young Douglas, urged his best efforts in the unfortunate man's behalf.

Another motive for his efforts in the matter was a sense of responsibility he felt as an employer. Such tragedies were not uncommon on other places, among the mixed help employed, and provided a lively business for the county officers, the coroner and the courts. But the history of La Mesa Vineyard had been free from such a stain. Cameron's regime had been a strict one. Strange to say, the man, easy with himself and

his friends and gracious toward his help, held a stern policy concerning the conduct of his vineyard. There was no drunkenness among the help during Cameron's time, Ortega alone excepted. But Ortega was a privileged character; his was the imaginative temperament which needed a spree in order to give complete freedom to his rich fancies and native eloquence. Duncan had maintained a similar rule and laid the necessity of the same on Morton when he gave affairs into his hands. Morton had betrayed his trust. He had set a demoralizing example in his own increasing dissipations and in the loose rein he gave to his men. Duncan burned with indignation that his reputation would be made to suffer as a result, aside from the terrible consequence induced. He would throw himself into the rescue of Antonio with all the resources he could command.

Jeanie, on his interrogation, told the story of the tragedy with the vividness lent by the shock to her own sensibilities. "An' his puir wife and his bairns—it was terrible deestriss! Antonio sits in his cell, they say, moanin' ower and ower agen, to think wha' he ha' brought on his hisel' and his family. But he curses Morton and the Hindoo, an' says if you had been here the thing would no ha' happened. He's got mair sense if he is a Mexican, nor Elsie and her man, who blame folks that ha' befriended them for things they bring on theirsel's wi' their ain folly."

Duncan groaned. He thought of the strangeness of his home-coming, that three catastrophes, each involving those to whom he was bound with warm ties of association and friendship, should await him, breaking upon his knowledge with startling effect and leaving him shaken with their significance of suffering, present and future.

He thought to tell his mother of Glad; he needed a woman's advice and help and Glad needed a woman's sympathy and

understanding, but he realized that this additional story of woe would be inopportune. Besides, he was not sure of his mother's co-operation. The case was one hard to explain to anyone, both from the delicacy and the unusualness of it, and Jeanie's mind was peculiarly impervious to new ideas and experiences. He decided not to speak of the matter—now, at least.

"Dinna grieve too much," said Jeanie, after a time, during which they had sat silent in their own thoughts. "It's not a' bad news I ha' to tell ye. The wine folks are that gratefu' for your wark last simmer that their plannin' great things frae ye."

"Yes?" said Duncan, absently; his mind was still wrestling with his problems.

"Aye! It's no less than the legeeslature they've booked ye frae—Maester Cummings, Maester Blythe an' the rest. I'll be that prood to ha' a son o' mine in the service o' the state that I canna' very easy contain mysel'." It was seldom Jeanie spoke in the spirit of maternal ambitions. The effort showed her anxiety for Duncan in the unhappy news she had had to impart, and he was touched by her solicitude.

"Yes," he said, "it would be very fine. I heard something about it in town, but I thought it was a josh. They really mean it, do you think? But they are awfully deceived as to my talents. Arguing a few senators into line for a proposition, the logic of which is as plain as the nose on your face, doesn't require genius. Besides, it takes money to get into the legislature.

"But the wine men have something they want to do. I saw Blythe a moment in town this afternoon. It involves a regular position for the summer and Blythe hinted at something else. I'll go in and see him tomorrow and at the same time see about the mortgage he holds on the 250 acres—it's about time to renews it, if he'll do it, and I guess by his cordiality today, he

will. If anybody was served by my work at Washington last summer, Blythe was, personally, so I guess he won't turn me down. Don't worry!" At the sight of Jeanie's anxious face—poor Jeanie, who had been dogged all her life with the spectre of calamity to her home, her pinched and care-worn little face with its newly whitened hair—he reached toward her with one of the shy caresses that passed between them rarely.

'Forget it—everything—till tomorrow! Things will come out all right I hope, both for ourselves and others. I guess I'll step over now to the Cumming's for a few minutes before going to bed." The color rose into his cheeks. Jeanie affected to see nothing.

"Oh, aye!' she said, "go. Mrs. Cummings called up juist this morning to know whether you were coming hame today or no'. She'd heard it frae some o' th' men. She seemed rale glad."

Duncan went to his room and effected his toilet with some pains. Then he left the house striking diagonally across the large yard, a collie at his heels. His pulses were moving fast and he did not walk like a man who had completed a three-thousand-mile trip and had his soul racked by these catastrophies that day. He was going to see Corinne Cummings. Her faintly-scented note in his pocket, received just before leaving, was one of the new evidences of interest shown in him by his home folks. Corinne's letters had been few the past year. Just now he craved the sight of her and the feel of her presence, like thirst or hunger, as a counteractive from the sordid tragedies that had filled his first hours at home.

CHAPTER TEN

It was characteristic of Duncan, who had had no life of his own, that even his heart affair should be in the nature of a substitution. The girl he lov d was the little miss who had enamored Douglas and on whom the lad was showering his youthful gallantries that fateful day of the barbecue.

The fathers, warm friends, had plotted together as friends will, for the future of their children and the latter seemed bent on forwarding those designs. Corinne was mature for her age and already her girlish coquetries involved Douglas as their object with ardent response. This future was one of the fair pictures dashed ruthlessly out by young Douglas' death. It was not till years afterward that the two fathers pathetically rebuilt timid hopes for the two families' destinies, in the person of Duncan. That was when he was slowly taking credit to himself against great handicap in his last High School year. How great that handicap, Mr. Cummings was far more fitted to realize than Duncan's father.

The first knowledge that Duncan had partially succeeded in some degree in taking the place of Douglas to his father came to the former from Mr Cummings, at the time of Cameron's death. Duncan had never forgotten the kindness of his father's friend to him; his delicate and beautiful service of sympathy. Mr. Cummings had told Duncan that which had made his heart warm toward the older man ever since

"I think you should know," said Mr. Cummings, in his grave way as he bade Duncan goodbye on his return to college, "I think it might help to staunch your grief, or in some part to mitigate it, if you know what a blessing and comfort you

have been to your father." Duncan started and almost the first tears he had shed sprang to h s eyes.

"I know—we all know how you have tried, what a noble effort you have made in one of the most heroic of causes—that of trying to substitute in your self an object of happiness and promise to your father, to staunch the grief he bore in the death of your brother. It is my pleasure to tel you that you have succeeded: that you have, far beyond your knowledge or expectation, afforded your father the happiness and pride that would have been his in his son. If he was not able to show you that such was the result, let me say in justice to him, that it was because of his increasing infirmities. But just the day before he died he said to me. 'Cummings, I want to tell you that I have a happiness few men know. That s my son, my Duncan. I am afraid (and it will be no credit to myself) that this statement may come to you as a surprise. There was a time when I did not appreciate the boy as now; when I differentiated between him and his brother in favor of the latter. Perhaps that is the reason I lost him—Douglas.'

" 'But this son, this one who has been left to me, is a wonder, Cummings! He has devoted himself in utter unselfishness of heart—without reproach or without resentment because I so long prized his brother most—he has devoted himself to me, soul and body and mind to become the son I desired. And he is accomplishing it.' That was the day he received the telegram telling of your debate victory."

" 'I have withheld my appreciation too long,' your father went on, 'I am going to write tomorrow. I was sometimes impatient with him, I was impatient with him just at the last, as he went away. His solicitude for me—it ebuked me. You know how that goes, Cummings, when one knows himself to be at fault. But I shall write to him tonight.' "

Duncan's head had dropped on his hands and for the first time sobs, deep bdoy-racking sobs broke from him; he had carried the hurt of his inefficiency long and the words of his father's farewe l that day, though forgiven, had lived and burrowed deep and painfully into his heart.

"My boy, I am sorry! I thought to give you comfort—happiness!" exclaimed the older man, with solicitude. The boy seized the hand on his shoulder, crushed it between his two strong ones:

"Do not mind—*this*!" he panted, "you have made me happy. Indeed, you have given me the greatest happiness I have ever known."

Thereafter a new relation grew up between the older man and the younger. Duncan in great gladness of heart thought of him as a father and, presently, by a vague encouragement, an unspoken consent, he came to hope that the relationship might become real. A great expectation began to grow in his life, hanging on the fatal word "if," the word on which hung all the pathetic expectations of Dun an's life. *If* he could make good. *If* he could become worthy as Douglas, without doubt, would have been.

As for Corinne, perhaps it was not her fault; she was an only and pampered daughter—her vanity was more readily impressed than her affections and 'overs were many. She looked upon Duncan's shy ambition with calm and candid eyes and laid upon its fulfilment the same condition: *If* he could make good in a wordly way, *if* he could make good.

Corinne, in the fullness of physical charm and fresh spirits, was a panacea for morbidness. Her rich, exotic presence seemed to float to meet him as she moved down the long hall in answer to Duncan's ring and to envelop him in refreshment and intoxication. There were no half tones about her; her coloring was the sort lent by health, vigor and luxurious living. Her

gowns, after the manner of the times, displayed almost dazzlingly every woman's asset, her white shoulders and splendid proportions, the turn of her round ankle.

There was little reserve, little witheld. To meet the girl was like taking a bouquet of fragrant roses to one's self, or filling the eye with a gorgeous view. It was perhaps this generosity, this boldness of presence, that constituted the girl's attraction to Duncan, himself the most shy, and self deprecative of lovers. He needed to have a woman come more than half way. That she could withdraw, disconcertingly and completely, when whim seized her, was equally true and a thing for admiration.

She greeted him with the utmost pleasure. Her voice held a note that made his blood surge.

"Then you are in—I was afraid I might find you away," said Duncan, modestly. A great contentment took hold of him as she established him in her father's favorite chair and chose one in flattering proximity beneath the electrolier where the light fell dazzingly upon the bronze of her high coiled hair.

"We had an engagement, but I sent poor Mutter along, for I was sure you would call. No," she demurred at his jesture of expostulation. "You wouldn't have me miss a call from such a distinguished visitor—the genuis known as 'the coming man.' " She laughed the full uncurbed laugh that, again, was like her self.

"Oh, you are just the same as ever—so modest that you can't conceive of the honors that are on your horizon. Why you're the most talked of man in Riverdale. Do you know that?"

"If I am, then Riverdale hasn't much to talk about," said Duncan, but her words gratified him. The confirmation of his new popularity from her lips meant more than from any other. She was included among his new admirers, her words

showed that, and she courted his attentions—had expected his call th s first night. He recalled her former indifference and his heart beat with new hope and happiness. Mr. Cummings, pausing at the door of the drawing-room, begged entrance.

"Well, stranger, hello—" he greeted, "may I come in and shake hands with this big boy? How's the prodigal from the far country?" He gave Duncan a hand of real affection. "You're looking fine—just fine! Guess the east agrees with you. It ought to—you've been making good and making history both. Congratulation!"

The chat flowed happily, the graver talk of her father interrupted with delightful and irrelevent comments by Corinne. Mrs. Cummings returned in her coupe early from her evening engagement and joined them. Her greeting was fully as cordial and somewhat more effusive than that of the others. The parents excused themselves shortly and left the two alone. It was late when Duncan said goodnight. He made the short distance between the girl's house and his own with feet that did not feel the ground. Ronald, his dog, had difficulty in keeping pace with him and at the same time retaining the dignity that belongs to collies.

Duncan had forgotten in the glamor of the girl's renewed companionship the troubles that vexed him, Glad, on her fevered bed, Morton, going to perdition fast, and Antonio in his cell. Once, on the way over, the idea had occurred to him to take Glad's troubles to Corinne and her mother. But with the first glimpse of Corinne coming down the hall to greet him the idea vanished of itself. What did this charming vision of well-being and happiness have to do with Glad's pitiful tragedy?

Yet he felt subtly reproached. To-morrow he would settle on some conclusion of the matter. To-morrow he would

think of some efficient person he could trust with Glad's story. Why, to be sure,—Marlinee! Why hadn't he thought of Marlinee before. Confound it, he had forgotten her, and he was right there in the Journal office, too. Where was she then?—out on her "beat" no doubt. And he never even asked for her. To be sure, she would be just the one, the only one, in fact. He would feel no delicacy in presenting Glad's case to Marlinee, who, as a newspaper woman, was enured to all things. Bless her heart—he wanted to see her too!

Duncan dreamed of Corinne and her fragrant presence enveloped him intoxicatingly, as in reality. Then he dreamed of Marlinee. He apoligized to her profoundly for his oversight in forgetting her. Marlinee listened haughtily, pushing out her little chin till a dimple that belonged there was wholly lost. Then the dimple suddenly sprang back to its place—she made up an insolent little face and was gone.

CHAPTER XI

All his life Duncan had been conscious of a separation between himself and a large part of mankind as represented in his acquaintance. That separation was occasioned by the industry in which his father was engaged. From the time of his earliest recollections the neighborhood had been divided into two elements: his father's friends—the families engaged in the wine industry, or favorable to it—and the "temperance folks."

As a child, he felt the subtle antagonism of opposing sentiment. It affected his relations at school, the friendship of some of his companions. As early as seven he learned his classification when the first temperance agitation began in the little viticultural community. A "Band of Hope" was organized in the neighborhood which the enthusiasm of the organizer painted as a most alluring prospect. Duncan, with his boy friends, were candidates for membership and presented themselves, together with other young Hopes on the day of organization. But a whispered taunt from a boy on the seat behind him blighted Duncan's ambitions and sent him home, his cheeks burning with indignation.

"Hum!" sniffed the boy, "*You* can't belong to th' Band of Hope. Your father grows wine!"

It was a wholly new idea, a fact clothed in the garb of an accusation. Shortly thereafter the ambitious new Hopers in the zeal of their campaign simplified the idea with a vigor that amounted to persecution of the sensitive child.

"Your father's a wicked man. He helps to make drunkards, and drunkards go to Hell."

It was an argument Duncan was not prepared to stand for and he fought it out with his two sturdy fists, routing the

entire band. Incidentally the circumstance was typical of the fate of the liquor opponents for many years.

Fists could route opponents but not ideas and the idea of the culpability of the w ne grape grower persisted in the minds of many in the community. The lad however, was fortified a ainst the sentiment by his father's disposal of the matter, when the subject was brought to his attent on. The attitude of the latter was one of large charity toward the reformers as men and women possessed of an irritating but harmless obsession. The doctrine of temperance as opposed to prohibition was expounded in Cameron's best style together with the absurdity of the latter. His logic seemed unanswerable.

The result of his father's counsel was to establish in the boy an attitude of superio ity toward his persecuters, mingled with condescension, but the consciousness of his neighbor's criticism emphasized his natural reserve. His new judgments worked for himself a hardship also, when some of his most admired friends happened to belong to the unfortunate and inferior class. This was the case with Marlinee.

Marlinee was one of Duncan's few real freinds. She was his neighbor—his chum. On her pony she galloped to school by his side every day of the High School year and when the weather was bad it was only courtesy to take her into the shelter of the curtained family phaeton. Such intimacy bred a fine comradeship, yet Marlinee was among the Philistines. For no apparent reason than perversity, Marlinee, uninfluenced by family—for she had no family—nor apparently by convictions, for how could a girl of sixteen have acquired such a grotesque thing as convictions—Marlinee had taken her stand among the reformers, the cranks. In coming into possession of a little vineyard property left her by a relative in Cameron's neighbrohood, she had ordered the healthy,

prosperous vines pulled out and, after profound consideration, had planted the land to alfalfa.

It was a body blow to friendship and Marlinee knew it. She knew it and she pushed up her little chin till the dimple in it was quite lost and made her red mouth into a grim line as when combatting physical pain. Marlinee had the blood of the martyrs. She drew her moral hardihood from her father and the dimple from her mother.

Her father she had never seen, but she knew him to have been a man of convictions and convictions make for heroism. He had graduated at Harvard and at once took his classical learning and his convictions to the poor whites of the Tennessee mountains. Later he went to western Kansas. He took with him his young wife. She was one of Memphis' blue-blood families How she came to fall in love with a missionary minister was a mystery, but perhaps it was the Harvard man she loved. Marlinee remembered her wonderful star-eyed mother. Her father had died for his convictions—shot to death by the lawless element in the little western town that he had the temerity to oppose. Marlinee's mother had never felt right toward Providence afterward. She had always thought that Marlinee's father was worth all the souls in western Kansas that he had tried to save.

Marlinee's family appeared a short-lived one. While in Kansas her mother's people, few in the beginning, faded out. They had been gently brought up and the war and the after struggle for existence precipitated by it, had been too much for them It was a distant relative of Marlinee's father who took compassion on the girl, almost the only survivor of her line He was an eccentric old bachelor and remembered her when he was dying with the small wealth he had accumulated in his many California experiments. With an ancient mammy who had come, a young maid, from Tennessee with Marlinee's

mother, she made her home on the vineyard of the charitable bachelor and blessed him for his charity.

Marlinee was one of hose women so baffling to men, wholly and satisfyingly feminine from the crown of her head to the sole of her natty feet, possessed of the seductiveness of the sex that says to the mascul ne, "I am a woman and your natural conquest." Marlinee was apt, by a sudden flash of spirit, a challenge of wit, to frustrate omplacency and reveal a vigorous and independent mind that demanded more than the ordinary masculine blandishments for its subjugation. In other words, Marlinee had that discomforting possession, a mind of he own.

Duncan had never practised masculine bland'shments on Marlinee. Her vigorous character had a tonic effect upon him, and her unaffectedness expelled his diffidence. He was at home with her and at his best. He gave her his confidence. At least he gave her more than he gave any other human creature

It was not much. Duncan was at no time communicative. But the girl knew him, through and through, by the quick perception of a woman. She stood in his life for a certain things of which he had been deprived. He had had little fellowship with other boys; he had had no boyhood of his own. His life had been wholly different from that of the normal lad. He felt old and constrained at the High School with the exuberant youth of his own age, their young conceits and enthusiasms. He was lost with shyness in the presence of most girls. Marlinee's was to him both a boy's and girl's companionship, a sister's—almost a mother's. Her solicitudes, shaken off by him with affected scorn, her wise counsels—the counsels of sixteen—her scoldings, were all prized by him. Then, too, she furnished opportunity of return in all the ways she stood for him: opportunity for a brother's advice and bully-

ing—there were occasions when Marlinee would take bullying —but invariably with a meekness of spirit that caused the pleasure of the bullier to be largely lost.

He was encouraged to practice the social arts upon her. Indeed, never in her most independent moments did Marlinee allow Duncan to forget the proper attentions due the feminine sex. She was most punctilious about these things. It was a part of her ideals and her training of Duncan. Theirs was one of those delightful friendships in which the interchange was perfect; one which can exist at no time except the period of the boy and girl age—the age of adolescence when sex consciousness is still dormant, or submerged in the confusing sensations of mental and physical awakening and even then its duration must necessarily be short. Each offered to the other, at that period, a complete antithesis, Duncan's slow but solid mentality checkmating Marlinee's delicacy, her quick brain in which the intuitions of a woman were more than normally developed.

But one shadow lay between them: their differeing convictions. In Marlinee's breast it constituted a deep hurt, a judgement of Duncan, the only reservation in her complete liking of him, but an insurmountable and ineradicable one. In Duncan's mind th feeling was one of irritation, disappointment: Marlinee, a girl of intellect and breeding, deliberately taking her place among the inferior, the narrow minded—the "cranks." It was inexplicable, it was maddening, but there was no help for it. They had had one encounter that b gan with a sincere purpose on the part of each to show the others his error. It ended with a flash of temper and tears on the part of Marlinee, self disgust with Duncan, apologies and a permanent truce by both. But the hurt and the estrangement was there.

Duncan had not approved of Marlinee's newspaper venture, though she had eventually persuaded him that a girl who has

but an eight acre alfalfa ranch and no family has need to look after her future. Duncan said, 'Girls get married." Marlinee answered that they married if the right men asked them. It was a new idea to Duncan. He had never thought o there being a dependent clause in the situation. But it was like Marlinee to have created one. Looking at it that way he consented, thoug reluctantly, to Marlinee's going into the Journal office in which he had a share. In fact he got his father to reserve the place for her.

Marlinee "did" society on the paper. The Journal had the prestige of the oldest sheet in town and the most unfortunate. Cameron had created it in the first year of his arrival. It dated back to the time when the town consisted of a dozen houses set on a burning plain—and expectations. It had had half a dozen owners in as many years. Cameron was but one who had invested good money in the ill starred organ and lost it. But the paper continued and the people continued to take the paper. If the last hopeful editor, with a small wad to lose, failed, the residents of Riverdale clubbed together and the evening Journal became a co-operative sheet, one of the town's monuments.

Marlinee took the society editor's desk. She was small, she was new, she was practically unknown. The city editor was skeptical. A smart, new, morning paper had broken into the business recently with up-to-date type and a Sunday edition. The new sheet had "Society" coming it way. But Marlinee made good.

CHAPTER XII

Duncan was up at five in the morning. Before he left for town, at nine, he practically had been over the whole place. With Morton in the machine beside him he had inspected each vineyard and by questions and observations, assisted by his thorough knowledge of every detail of the industry, he had caught up the threads of the enterprise again, not wholly released during his absence. With the admirable efficiency of the specializing mind that assimilates ideas like a well working engine, Duncan listened to the answer of one question while his mind formed the next one, or jumped ahead to a new one suggested by his quick perception of some feature in the scene before him.

Morton replied to Dunca's interrogations with the inward admiration he felt for his young employer, coupled with personal qualms. He was perfectly aware of his increasing incompetency. He had been to some extent able to hide his short comings from Duncan's mother, to cover some of the mistakes and neglect occasioned by his irresponsible days. But with Duncan it was different. Some of his questions embarrassed him and his first greeting was not cheerful.

"Well, Morton there's been some pretty bad work going on here. I'm sick about Antonio. It was all wrong, Morton. You knew it was strictly against my principles—allowing the help to booze." Of Morton's own habits, Duncan said nothing. He intended to follow the policy indicated to his mother. It was possible that Morton, with his unspoken moral support, might brace up. If necessary, he would give him a vacation and help him to get away for a few months to new surroundings where the start toward reform might be made easier.

In town Duncan devoted himself first to Glad's cause. He called up the hospital and asked about her. She was "doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances." The reply was most enlightening and he went to Doctor Elliot's office. The Doctor was his family physician. He knew Duncan's family as none but the family physician does, and he was extremely fond of Duncan. The latter found it difficult to turn the conversation from the personal—the Doctor's interested inquiries about his and his mother's welfare—to the subject of Glad, and still greater difficulty in introducing the subject without embarrassment. But his anxiety abbetted him and he succeeded fairly well.

"Hum," grunted the Doctor, "So that was your quixotic adventure. Well—it's a good thing there's somebody to befriend the girl, though the biggest end of her trouble is over—her physical state and the mental excitement occasioned by your visit." Duncan looked startled.

"Don't worry, it's her salvation you know. Funny civilization ours," he mused, "that a natural thing like creation should cause such a furore—consternation in society, brain storm for the mother, a poor little embryo man deprived of his privilege of becoming a citizen. Might have made a bully one too, after all. And all over a natural phenomenon called 'life.' Funny, isn't it?" Duncan was offended by his facetiousness. He failed to appreciate the standpoint of the professional mind.

"This wasn't nature," he said bluntly. "It was a frightful forced thing. The man made her drunk. It happened in your fine new Parisian here." The Doctor raised his eyebrows.

"So?—Well! That's the fourth case of the kind that's come to us lately from the same source. Old Drury—M. D.—you know Drury—the same that had trouble about his state license last year? Drury was sent up last week for helping

a victim of the Parisian out of her troubles. It's devilish—this smart cafe business! And this little girl—as you say—she's charming, and from the best sort, apparently."

"How is she now?" asked Duncan, anxiously.

"Oh, she's all right—physically, I mean. Or will be, soon. The trouble with her kind is to help her get back into life again. That's what I say—society, for being the product of civilization that it is, is about the most uncivilized and brutal institution going. It's an abnormal, distorted thing, and its judgments are distorted. This little creature—what's she done? She's fulfilled the law of her nature—the greatest law of the universe—procreation. But because she fulfilled it without having a few words indorsed by society and the law said, she is damned, and the innocent human atom that was within her. There were just two things for her to do—commit murder and be received back grudgingly, perhaps, some day, by this same pious society, or let nature have its way, and bring forth a child to the same damnation to which she seemed doomed, and consign herself to a woman's perdition—chattel to all men's passions. She is partly, possibly, saved by this revulsion or sacrifice of nature. Civilization—isn't it? What do you suppose is the cost of loss to this nation yearly in lives that society, by its attitude says mustn't live? And many of these children, if they had been let to live in decency and approbation would make as good citizens as anybody else.

"Oh, I'm not preaching immorality or promiscuousness, but I'm a man who is interested in life—human life—and it makes me sick to think of such nonsensical waste!"

Duncan had listened quietly with immense interest in the unusual outburst coming from the curt, professional man, who ordinarily kept his own counsel. It was a line of thought, like many others that his mind had never followed. To his

own surprise and to the Doctor's he answered quickly and with spirit.

"I thought it was 'selection' you scientific men were interested in, the improvement, not the increase of the species. The attitude of society, as you say, is deadly toward a girl like Glad, but it constitutes humanity's safe guard. Remove it, and brutes like the one in this case will have their way and the world will be populated with degenerates." The Doctor started, eyed Duncan critically and laughed. He was immensely pleased by the boy's unlooked for keeness and readiness at retort. It was something new in him, since he had last known him.

"Very good young man. You use your brains to some advantage. Guess Yale has done something for you. Well, come in again—" as Duncan rose to go. "Any message you want me to take to the little girl? She can't see anybody today, but after that come whenever you want to. She'll need you."

From the Doctor's office Duncan went to the courthouse, to seek the District Attorney for permission to visit Antonio. He wanted to talk to him before consulting his lawyer, and learn from his own lips of the tragedy.

At the jail he was shown into Antonio's cell. The man, sitting listlessly on his cot, staring into space, started at the sound of a visitor. At sight of Duncan he gave a peculiar cry like that of a hurt dog and fell on his knees before him, hugging his legs, sobbing, and gazing at him with streaming face; then falling again upon him with heart rending sobs. He had shown no emotion before, since his arrest, not even in the presence of his wife and children. In court, undergoing his preliminary examination, he had presented a wholly stolid attitude, a stoicism that had the semblance of indifference. Duncan was nearly unmanned by the sight. The utter aban-

donment of the strong and self contained man was appalling.

"Antonio!" He raised the Mexican to his feet. "This is terrible to find you here!" Antonio felt his words a rebuke and fell away from him, sinking down on the edge of his cot, his face in his hands, the tears falling between his fingers.

"Ah, no—no—don't say that, Duncan, my friend—my one friend! I didn't do it. I didn't do it—oh no—not I, not I *myself*." Duncan was much moved.

"No, I didn't mean that. I wasn't blaming you. I know all about it. It's God's pity, Antonio! I'd give anything I possess to have been here. I might have hindered, I might have prevented this awful business!"

"Ah!" the man groaned an agonized assent, but he was bent yet on justification in the eyes of his friend. "They say I did it. They've proved I did it—by the knife—by the blood upon me," he shivered, "but in the name of the Holy Mary, Duncan, I never knew it. I swear I never knew it! I never meant to. It was the booze!

"Why I'd have been a fool to have done it. Sure I hated the Hindoos. They cut our wages. Morton hired 'em and let us—most of us—go, who had worked for you and your father before you. He threatened to fire me. But even so I wouldn't have done it—murder a man! I am a good man—am I not? I belong to father Felix's church. I know the holy commandments: 'Thou shalt not kill'—and he that kills is damned!" He shuddered. "I have a family. Would I have done that? No, I couldn't have done such a thing, if I'd been sober—to *kill* a man!" at every utterance of the word he hestitated, shivering with a dark horror in his face. "It was the booze—*Maria Madre*! It was the booze!" His head fell in his hands again and he groaned as in physical pain.

"But Antonio—you were a sober man, before I went away, and for years after you married, you were steady and temper-

ate. You were saving money. How did you come to take to the stuff again?"

Antonio groaned. "Ah, I don't know. I was a fool. I was doing well. I didn't want it except when I went to town and that wasn't often. Morton got the wine from Bernardini's—said there was no reason why we shouldn't have it on occasions, with it right handy there. He kept it in the old drying shed, across from the winery, and we drank it there."

"*Sold* it to you?"

"Sold it to all the help 'round about. Yes, I know it was against the law, but he said, 'Damn the law!' and he urged our patronage—mine especially; intimated that it went with my holding the job. Then I was sore too, about the new men, and he threatening to fire me, and I took to drinking—one wants the booze when he has anything *here*." Antonio put his hand to his heart with a pathetic gesture.

"So it happened there one night, or coming home—the Hindoos and Garcia and some of the others and me. I don't know what started it—the booze—just the booze.

"The others were ahead and we got to quarreling, I suppose. He was drunk, too, I reckon, though his friends swear he wasn't. And I knifed him—at least,I must have. The knife was found beside him and I had his blood on me." He was talking calmly again, stolidly, his face fallen into the indifferent lines that had impressed the judge unfavorably.

"But any fool would know I did'nt do it apurpose. I was lying in the little ditch you know, a yard on, dead to the world, when the sheriff came. I didn't know anything till they put me in the tank here." Duncan heard the man's droning story almost without listening. It was the stale story of a Mexican cutting affair that invariably netted the undertaker a corpse, the penitentary a "lifer" and the county one more indigent family.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

But now it was Antonio that was telling the story, Antonio who, having run through his larking days when he drank with the best, took him a wife—one of the prettiest of the young *senoritas* of the vine-yard—and at the same time, denying his passionate southern nature that takes to drink as to water, became a steady, reliable hand, one of the best on the place, his excesses confined to the end of grape picking time. With this boy he had played, had measured all his young prowess and found him a worthy opponent. He had left him one year ago a clean, open faced, sober man. He found him today in this stifling cell, already the look of a criminal upon him. He sat in moody reflections, his shoulders drooping, his mouth set in sullen lines, his eyes holding an abandoned expression. He looked ten years older than his age. With a wrench of the heart, Duncan recalled the girl he had sat with the afternoon before in her shabby room in the cheap boarding house—so like, in her frightful transfiguration to this man. He started. Antonio was saying:

"*It's an awful thing to forget yourself*! *It's an awful thing to take a thing that makes you forget*!"

The words seemed but an echo of the anguished cry of the ravished girl the preceding day.

Antonio happily had remembered Duncan's lawyer. He had retained him at a price that with one swoop wiped out his little savings, and much more. Duncan sought him. He would do his best, but Duncan knew how hard it was to clear a Mexican. The prejudices were against him, besides, juries showed no leniency nowadays toward booze victims. The man who killed when he was drunk was held as guilty as the man who killed when he was sober. Duncan winced.

"That's awful," he said. "Look at this case. Here's a man as steady as any in the country." The lawyer interrupted

skeptically: "Never saw a *cholo* that wouldn't booze," he said.

"Well, Antonio isn't a *cholo*. He's in another class altogether," said Duncan. "He takes his glass like the rest of us, but he's no boozer and hasn't been for years. But in my absence my man, Morton, began boozing himself, at a one-horse joint by my place that calls itself a winery. He conceived a little boot-legging business to catch a few pennies that might get to town and solicited my men's patronage with the hint that it would look to the keeping of their jobs. Antonio got drunk, fighting drunk, and killed this Hindoo in a cutting fray—I guess the testimony will show that the Hindoo had a knife, too. Has Antonio to spend the rest of his life in jail for this thing and his little family go on the county?"

"Its the law. You can't let men kill each other when they're drunk any more than when they're sober. The result is just the same—there's a dead one." Duncan reached for his hat:

"Well, what's to be done about it?"

"I don't know, my boy," said the lawyer, rising at the same time and walking to the door with him, "I don't know unless you and your friends of the liquor industry go out of business—unless we let the prohibitionists take the state." Duncan shot a challenging look at him. Was he joshing or was this a home thrust from a friend?

"You don't mean that?" he said interrogatively. The attorney struck a match, lighted a cigar and took a delicate whiff. He opened the door to let Duncan out.

"Oh, no," he said, dryly, "I suppose that wouldn't be practical. Besides it would eliminate some of our business."

With his altruistic objects of interest attended to, Duncan sought those of his own. The morning had been a hard one and the relish of anticipation aroused by Blythe's suggestions had been lost in the incidents of the past hour. The Doctor's words had made him even more concerned for Glad than before.

Antonio's tragic situation oppressed him and Cliffe's sally was ill-timed, to say the least. Duncan was too sore in the spot it touched him. Prohibition was the last thing he thought of for a solution of the harrowing problems.

CHAPTER XII-A

Duncan found Blythe in the inner office of his large wholesale house. The latter sprang to his feet and greeted the young man with a great cordiality.

"Well, I'm glad to see you. Sit down." He pulled up a deep leather padded chair for Duncan and seated himself behind the great oak desk. All of Blythe's office equipment was luxurious.

"Now to business. There are several things to get over. First, this Wet campaign. We've got to organize, we wine men. Fact, we *have* organized—organized the Grape Growers Protective Association. The name indicates its purpose. It's to rally to the Wet campaign, the forces of the grape growers as well as those of the liquor people, to interest even the raisin men, who are involved with the interests of the Wets, as you know, for if the wine industry is knocked out they'll lose the market for their second crop of muscats—a big item to them. It's to get them all lined up on the proposition, together with the rest of the liquor business, so we can present a solid front to the enemy.

"There's another reason for organizing the grape people. There are a lot of folks that are opposed to the saloon and the saloon element that arguments in favor of the latter wont hold. We've got to furnish 'em other arguments—the arguments of the wine industry, for permancy in life.

"That'll touch 'em. We want to send out broad-cast over the state, literature giving the statistics concerning the industry —the sort you used in your campaign in Washington last summer; post 'em on what it'll mean to the state if the Dry amendment carries; make 'em see it'll touch their own particular business. We've got to visit the chambers of commerce and

other business and industrial organizations all over the state and line 'em up for us—see?

"Now, that's the stuff, and you're the man to do it, from your working knowledge of the industry and your experience at Washington last summer. We want you—got to have you. Will you do it?"

"Why sure, Mr. Blythe, anything I can," answered Duncan. "It's to my interest as well as the rest of the wine people. The industry has certainly seen enough vicissitudes without having a knock out blow just now. Of course, I expected to go right on to the vineyard; dismiss my foreman at the end of the grape season, and take hold of things myself; economy makes it necessary that I should, but if, as you indicated the other day, this work would carry a salary with it so that I could afford to take the job and keep my man on, I'll be only too glad to take it—would be glad to take it without any remuneration you understand, if I could."

"That's all right, that's all right!" answered Blythe, "We wouldn't expect you to. And now for the next proposition. Of course, you know we expect you to be our next assemblyman." Duncan flushed and made a deprecative jesture.

"Sure we do. Everybody is talking about it and its a sure thing as far as the wine folks are concerned. So that brings us to our last proposition. I am just consolidating my business, getting it into more wieldy form. As you know it consists of large wholesale and retail business houses at Stockton, Sacramento, Bakersfield and Los Angeles, and other interests of an extensive nature. At the present time its not managed with the profit it might be—there's too much leakage. What I want to do is to form a partnership with some live business man who can share my work and responsibility. A sort of field manager—and thus cut out so many small offices.

"Now it has occured to me that you might be just that kind

of a man and that the chance I offer might at this time prove opportune to you. I followed your work last summer at Washington with a good deal of attention. It showed not only a thorough experience in the industry, more than the mere grower would be expected to have, but it showed also a high degree of intelligence, initiative, and ability to cope with men. I will say without attempt at flattery that you have surprised us all here and that you show promise of a big man. You have combined your father's persuasive personailty with a thoroughly practical mind and the combination can't help but win."

Duncan remained silent. He was paralyzed by the significance of the offer—a partnership with Blythe, one of the biggest wine men of the state, whose yearly income was commonly reported as a million! If he had been slow to appropriate the favor in which he appeared to be held by the community, as expressed in the phrases of his other friends, this dazzling proposition left him no doubt as to his new status among his fellow citizens. Yet, he could scarcely credit the fact that his services at Washington had proven so effectual, the talents manifested in his work so promising, that a man like Blythe would make him an offer like this.

Blythe continued to talk. He liked to state a business proposition without interruption, and Duncan's self contained manner, his control of his very visible surprise, pleased him. It showed unlooked for maturity and poise.

"This is my proposition. I know, of course, that you haven't the capital to put into the business and that your place is heavily involved. You gave me your confidence to some extent, you remember, when we renewed the mortgage the last time. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take up your outstanding notes for you and renew the mortgage I took on the two hundred and fifty acres. I'll take over your equity in the other acreage as your share in my business. I'll give

you a salaried managership and moreover I'll back you for the legislature—you won't have a cent to pay toward getting there. Now how about it?"

Duncan had nothing to say for a moment. If he had been astonished before he was dumb now with the magnitude of Blythe's generosity and the flattery it implied. The deep color mounted to his temples and showed crimson under his fair skin. His emotion was not lost on Blythe, who was fully aware of the unusualness of his proposition and the effect it could be expected to have on a modest young man whose powers were as yet unrealized by himself. He had not made the offer inadvisedly. It was something to get hold of the talents of a young man like Duncan and make them his own. It was something—a good deal—to have the next assemblyman from his district his own man, a man pledged not only to look well after the interests of the wine men, but his own in particular. He had little idea that the Dry amendment would carry this year, but the prohibitionists would no doubt push the advantages gained in this campaign and would precipitate another at no remote date. There was need for work, and the best kind of work, at the state capital in the interests of the liquor traffic and those particular phases of it that Blythe represented.

There was reason for hesitation on the part of Duncan other than emotion. The proposition involved, in the suggested partition of the vineyard, the relinquishment of his father's ideal concerning it. But would not Cameron gladly have forfeited this long ambition in the new and splendid prospects opened to the one man of his family? In the thought of his father's pleasure the moment was one of rich happiness for Duncan. When he spoke it was with directness:

"Mr. Blythe, to say that I am astonished at your offer is to put it mildly. It involves a compliment to my ability that

I cannot accept without hesitation. You're generous to a degree that I couldn't have expected, for no matter what confidence the work you referred to has inspired in you, you are laying on my future, a tremendous wager. If I went into the business though, I'd try to see that you didn't lose." He squared his shoulders.

"If I had only myself to think of you may be sure I wouldn't hesitate a moment. It's a kind of a proposition at which a young fellow like me shouldn't have to halt, but there is one feature that necessitates my taking the matter under consideration. That is, the parting with a portion of the place. I hope this doesn't seem petty to you. It's this way: my father had an ideal concerning his vineyard—maybe you've heard him speak of it. It was his hope to keep it intact and bring it to a high state of development; to make of it a permanent estate known throughout the country, a place to bear his name. It's unusual, I know—such an ambition—to us practical, hustling westerners. It's a part of the old country idea of the family estate handed down from generation to generation. It's not a bad idea either I think. It means something permnent—something worth working for—that shows a man has lived and maintains in him responsibility for his posterity." Duncan was speaking rapidly, eagerly, defending his father's ideals from a skeptical and somewhat deprecative smile that had crept into Blythe's face. Blythe had never been accused of being an idealist.

"I see, I see," he said, when Duncan had done, "and it's quite natural that you should feel so. You're only a generation removed from old-country ideals yourself. It's natural, and commendable too, that you would like to honor your father's wishes, but we can't be too idealistic when a living is at stake, can we? Beside you have your future to look to. It'd certainly be a greater matter of satisfaction to your father to see

you forge ahead and make a substantial name and place for yourself than to retain some rather impractical ideals. We can't live here in the west or think, here, like they do over there, and our monuments in this country are *men*, not estates.

"I offer you what you have acknowledged as a rare opportunity, and I admit that it is such. It's not every man at twenty-five or so who has such prospects. It's yours by virtue of your own talents—and the times. I tell you, young fellow, you've come like a Daniel to judgment—pardon—I once went to Sunday school!" he laughed with heavy humor.

"I say that the liquor interests have need of strong and young blood and a lot of work where it'll do the most good, in the next few years. You saw something of the opposition developed against us at Washington The prohibition forces are growing in this country and growing fast and the opposition to the saloon is such that without a shadow of a doubt it's only a matter of time till that institution, as at present known, will be put out of business entirely. You understand that I wouldn't make a public statement to this effect, but we liquor men must face the facts. There's just one thing that may avert that climax and that at any rate can save the manufacturing and grape growing interests; that is the exploitation of wine as an every day domestic beverage in this country, and that's the work cut out for us to do right now; the fostering of the wine industry in the country.

"I was in Europe last year—traveled all over the continent and gave special attention to this thing. Scarboro of the Producers and Wholesale Company is working on the same thing now; collecting proofs of the efficacy of the wine drinking habit as opposed to drunkeness and excess. It's the only argument that's going to hold the people and maintain our business.

"It's funny, what shortsighted idiots there are even among

educated folks," meditated Blythe, "To argue that because a fool like, say your Morton, for instance, acquires the booze habit, even a harmless thing like our light wines must be eliminated from family and social use. Why! Look at the lots of us like myself and others that were brought up on whisky straight and as much as we wanted of it, who have as good hearts, and a good deal better heads than the little two-by-four timid men that call for lemon soda and straws, and die at forty-three of inanity." Blythe pounded his first on his blotter pad, with emotion.

"The fellows that *do* get down and out with the stuff are the ones like Morton that have been raised in temperance families back in prohibition Kansas, and are so all-fired dry, that when they once get started they make hogs of themselves. By the way, what are you going to do about Morton? Pardon the suggestion, but he isn't a particularly good advertisement for your business and the prohibition folks are always happy when they can get an 'awful example' like that. I wouldn't have known anything about it, but Morton came into my office one day to talk business with me and I sent him home till he could present a respectable appearance. I don't stand for such fellows around me."

"I'm disgusted with Morton," said Duncan, "and humiliated that things have been going on as they have—this cutting affair, it's awful! Antonio was one of the best men we ever had, absolutely all right. It's Bernardini's wine joint out there across from my place that's made the trouble. It's there the men have got the stuff, and it's there Morton's been feeding his perpetual thirst. A winery hasn't any business to retail goods to the help, even inside the law, and Bernardini and Morton have been doing a neat little boot legging business, in reality."

"You're right," agreed Blythe, "booze among the help means

inefficiency and your men laid off a third of the time. As for me, I won't stand for guzzling among my men, in any line of my business. I know the personal habits of about every man in my employ. I keep tab on every bar keeper in every saloon I own. I pay for steady and sober help, and whenever a man gets to be such a fool that he can't keep his appetite in bounds I fire him.

"But to return to this matter of wine exploitation. It must be a campaign of education, in two ways; first, that wine in moderation in the homes and in the places of refreshment is a harmless and beneficient thing, and second that our California wines are equal in every way to foreign importation. It's funny, but it's nature, I guess, that something brought in from over-seas, although it may be an inferior quality is better to most folks than home grown product. But we're doing much in the way of stimulating the market for home wines in the east. We've got some live men hold of the advertising end of the business and their work is showing.

"And the wine drinking habit in America is on the increase, both in public and in the homes. Especially out west here it's growing with the introduction of foreign drinking fashions—the open refreshment place, the cabarets, and the smart cafes. Yes sir, we've had an unlooked for ally in the increase of these places. I've opened or lent the money to open no less than fifty different ones the past year. They're the fashion, the fad, not only in the cities, but in the small places, in the villages even. They're *a la mode.*

"Entertainment and women are spreading our gospel these days. The women, bless 'em, are our most efficient exponents. They've put away their Puritan prejudices and are appreciating the real social value of wine, as it has contributed to the comfort and fellowship of mankind for ages. The women—well, before you leave we'll drink one to them!" Blythe

balanced a delicate ivory paper knife on his finger and gazed across it enthusiastically at Duncan. The latter did not respond with the enthusiasm his remarks had been designed to incite. He was silent for several moments.

"I hope," he said at last, "that I'm zealous for our industry and appreciate the efforts looking toward an increased demand for our product, but these smart drinking places that you say are helping things along, some of them are—*hell!*" He had begun with deliberation but concluded with a bluntness and force that made his listener start. He was thinking of Glad.

"Just what do you mean?" asked Blythe eyeing him keenly, his surprise showing in his face. Duncan was disgusted with himself, he had spoken impetuously, inadvisedly. He certainly did not wish to illustrate his contention by detailing Glad's story. Besides, this was a business engagement; he had showed bad taste. He passed the matter off as easily as possible.

"I beg your pardon for my abruptness, but I had something on my mind—a devlish thing I heard of yesterday that involved a little girl I used to know. There are knaves in every business, but the biggest one is the man who will let his places to such damnable purposes." Blythe smiled with relief and waved the interruption aside with a jesture of his hand. He was glad to ignore it.

"To return to the business in hand you can see what need we have at Sacramento for men that understand our business and appreciate the value and extent of it, men who will devote themselves to getting all the legislation possible that favors our interests and fosters the industry. That man, we think, as I said before, is you. It means everything to me personally whether or not we can in the next few years procure such legislation and at the same time block the designs of the prohibition cranks. That's the reason I want you both in the legis-

lature and my business and can afford to back you for the former. I also realize what it will mean a good deal to you as a young man to have the prestige of my business association and the financial status you will gain thereby. Go home and think it over and let me know what you decide. Come, lets step around to the Placentia and have something before you go, won't you?"

"Thank you, Mr. Blythe, I won't take your time any further 'though I appreciate the courtesy. I hope you know that I haven't words to express my appreciation of your offer, nor the significance of it as I see it. I'll let you know as soon as possible."

"Very well, very well! There is no particular hurry, take your time. Come around the end of the week and I'll show you over my Riverdale business—wholesale and retail—and we'll try and see some of my houses throughout the valley, too. Good bye."

CHAPTER XIII

Duncan telephoned to Marlinee and made an appointment for the hour after press time. Her buoyant voice over the telephone was an immense refreshment. It affected him like a cool breeze or a glass of wine when he was fagged. He would meet her at the office with the machine. They would go for a drive, and he would tell her of Glad.

The boys in the Journal news-room were at once apprised of the appointment by Norris, who had been mischievously eaves-dropping.

"Marlinee's made a date, Hayward, I heard her!" flung he at the courthouse man, "She's going out riding with the Senator." Hayward, whose open and thus far unsuccessful pursuit of Marlinee was an office diversion, dropped into an attitude of the utmost dejection.

"Marlinee has her eye on Washington all right," put in Gordon of the sporting column. "As a married man and one who knows, let me congratulate you on your judgment, Marlinee. Between a Senator and a newspaper man choose the former every time. There isn't any comparison when it comes to the bank account."

"Yes, that's right!" threw in Winston. "With the latter it's a case of 'everything going out and nothing coming in,' while in the case of the Senator, if he's thrifty, it's just the other way."

"Marl'ee, Marl'ee
I'm so sorry
That you threw me down.
"If you repeat it
I shall beat it
From this cruel town."

sang Hayward, whose reverses never destroyed his penchant for fun.

"Hayward!" rebuked Marlinee, "That's a perfectly impossible line—'*Marl'ee—Sorry*'!"

"Remember the 'comic sheet,' Hayward!" This from Gordon. The "comic sheet" was a prime office joke. Marlinee had confided to Gordon her embarrassment concerning Hayward's attentions:

"You know he's perfectly all right—dandy fine company, and he dances divinely! But—oh well—think of having a comic sheet right in the family, all the time!" Gordon snorted. The thing was too good to keep; it leaked, hence the haughty and distant attitude of the Society Editor toward the Sporting Man—a punishment borne with fortitude by the latter. Duncan's auto horn, a familiar signal, sounded at that moment outside the office door and Marlinee fled from her persecutors.

In the flesh, Duncan found the girl even more refreshing than over the telephone. Marlinee offered a direct contrast to Corinne, in coloring, as in all other things. Corinne suggested a resplendent sunset—Marlinee a "violet in a cool bed", to use the words of Hayward. "Darned cool" he amended, ruefully. A "Boston-Dixie-mix and an Irish-Creole blend" were other "Marl'ee-isms" of Hayward, suggested by her blue-black hair and Irish blue eyes. Today, she did not lend the appearance of a fagged society reporter at the end of a hundred-and-six-in-the-shade day. She gave Duncan her hand in frank and delighted greeting, her pleasure mounting to her cheeks in a delicate flush.

In the car she observed him with candid and approving eyes. He had changed in the year he had been gone, and for the better. There was the same quiet strength, the sense of power lent by his broad shoulders and quiet voice. There was his old abrupt way that she liked—almost brutal in its frankness.

But there was something more, a certain ease of manner and a consciousness of self-power that was new to him.

"I didn't see you yesterday when I was at the office," he said after their first interchange of greeting, and they were spinning smoothly out on a quiet boulevard. "You must have been out." She laughed, fingering delicately the long handle of her parasol.

"I know you didn't see me, but I saw you, and it was a sight I wouldn't have missed. It's something to see a 'coming man'—just at incubation, right at the breaking of the shell as it were. Now I've seen the man who have 'arrived,' often, and the man who hopes to arrive. He haunts our office daily. But the man who is just there—at the very point—You watch"—she indicated, breathlessly, "and you see him made! It's as thrilling as watching them blow a glass peacock at Hartley's while you wait." Duncan laughed ruefully.

"And he *acts* like a peacock—you mean. But say, really, you weren't there. I would have seen you—I looked for you."

"Oh, no you didn't," she contradicted. "I was right there in my little chair, in my little corner, and you didn't see me. But its no matter," she added, "you didn't see anybody—in fact, you were rattled. Now weren't you? It was real fun!"

"I say, you're joshing me—well anyway I wasn't the peacock you describe—I'm not even the coming man." He laughed embarrassedly. He remembered she was assigning him the same applause and in almost the same words as Corinne. He felt chagrinned that he had failed to see her. And he had sought Corinne on his first evening. He hoped she did not know that.

"But I insist that you are," she said. She bent toward him, earnestly: "You've come to your own. You are all that I knew you could be. It was in you from your mother and

your father. Its the father-part you've been adding last. I'm proud of you!" Her eyes shone with a bright emotion. He blushed with pleasure. It was a great thing to have such words from Marlinee, for she was as reserved in her deeper emotions, ordinarily, as himself. He was surprised, too, at her perception, for although he had not realized it before he acknowledged to himself she was right. He had grown and the latter growth was in a new likeness to his father. As always, when he felt deeply, he answered with bluntness.

"That's kind, Marlinee, it means a lot from you. I suppose one couldn't live in the east a year and not become changed somewhat. Its a great thing for a westerner—everything's so different. You have a sense of something older, bigger and more solid, and an appreciation of your own littleness. Then the University—that's a great university—there are great men there. I wouldn't have missed it for a whole lot. I'm mighty thankful I had the year back there—I'm mighty thankful my father insisted on it, though I was needed at home. I found things at the vineyard in a pretty mess when I got here," he added, the shadow falling across his face. "Of course, you know of Antonio? That makes me sick!" He spoke with a wince.

Marlinee reached her hand to him—a jesture that belonged to her. It was one of mute sympathy. Her own heart had been wrung at the news of Antonio. She had known him well; in the slack vineyard season he had worked for her on the ranch. But there was a bitterness in the tragedy for her, beyond the mere facts, that involved the old hurt.

She eyed Duncan's downcast face with a keen inquiry. Were his deductions no keener, with his increased experiences and larger intellectual life? Could he not see now, what had always been so plain to herself—the relation between cause and effect in this matter? She opened her mouth to speak, to

free her sore mind of the indignation, the grief she felt in the matter, the responsibility men had in the death of this one man and the doom of the other. Here was a time to press home her contention, to rid the argument, by this illustration, of any sentimental, overdrawn aspect.

But she hesitated. Surely he would see it now, in this instance in which he was so closely involved. Surely with his tenderness of heart and solicitude he would sense it. Surely already he realized it. It was that, partly, that brought the brooding to his face and the shudder to his voice as he spoke. It would be brutal to turn the thrust in the wound. Or—if he did not see, if *this* could not convince him, would she do so by her own arguments? No, let him wait—let him learn himself. It would be a discredit to his own mentality to have his convictions fixed by a woman. Marlinee's deep pride in him forbade that. He must learn for himself—his own reason, his own perceptions must teach him or she would never do it.

"It was terrible"—she said with all the horror she felt, in her voice, "Is there any possibility of saving Antonio? The boys said things looked badly."

"Little, I'm afraid," answered Duncan. He detailed briefly Attorney Cliffe's opinion. He observed her distress and sensed its unspoken implication. It suggested precipitation of the old debate. He changed the subject quickly and their intercourse sought pleasanter channels. There was much to talk of; he related some of his college and Washington experiences—she sketched drolly some of the encounters of her day, the gossip of the office and the neighborhood, for she spent her week-ends at her ranch. They renewed with ease and pleasure the old, delightful comradeship. At the last he had nearly forgotten the main errand on which he sought her.

"By the way, Marlinee, I want to crave a favor, a very unusual one, in fact. I've neglected in the pleasure of seeing and

talking with you again, a very unhappy errand I had." He told her the story of Glad with less embarrassment than he had thought, her matter of fact, practical manner and her interest and solicitude making it easy.

"I remember the girl. She was a darling—an exquisite little thing and so unspoiled. I was interested in her and used to talk to her when I would be in the store sometimes. I meant to keep track of her, to look after her a little, she was so young and new, but I forgot, or got busy or something. We're *all* at fault in these things. I'll do anything I can now—anything you want me to.

"Oh," she cried impulsively. "You don't know anything about the evil that is going on in the world—or perhaps you do—your a man. But *I* see it. I know it; so much that I'd rather not know—not believe. A newspaper office is a clearing house for such things. We ought to help—we who know what's right—we who are strong! There are so many weak ones in the world and so many wicked ones like this man. And he got this baby drunk—oh—I could kill him!" She spoke with a vehemence that shook her; a passion that struck the youthful lines from her face and made it old and rebellious.

The change was startling. Duncan saw it with wonder, with dismay. He had been right, Marlinee should not have taken up this line of work; its experiences were too hard for her, its revelations too brutal for her delicate sensibilities. He wholly overlooked the crux of her bitterness: here it was again, and a woman the victim. The women are always the victims, in the last solution. Only the Sunday before she had visited Antonio's frantic wife and she had not slept that night. Oh, blind—blind—blind—were men! There were none who saw but the women, the women that "must weep." Duncan saw the thoughts reflected in Marlinee's troubled face.

"You mustn't take it so hard," he said, gently—"or I shall

be sorry I told you. You mustn't let it affect you so—this or anything else. Such things will happen, I suppose, though I confess this was something new to me—a revelation. I guess I've been awfully self centered. I never thought of these things much—of one's responsibility to others. Every thing seemed to be sort of fixed and established, I never could see what folks were butting into other people's affairs for, all the time, with their regulations and reforms. They made me tired. But here is a case where somebody ought to have interfered. That man ought to be shot!" He recalled Marlinee's threat and laughed. "I guess between us we'll do it. Anyway I mean to see if there can't be a stop put to this thing—that cafe's license revoked, or something."

Marlinee's face had cleared, she was smiling. *This* from Duncan! This acknowledgement of a new self—this understanding of a past blindness so evident to herself. Ah, he had changed, and this was a part of it. But was he ready for the final and logical step? She thought with anxiety of the flattery and opportunities opening to him; the new popularity he enjoyed among his friends. The whole city, or at least the business district was calling for him as the leader against the Drys in the present campaign. Could he resist? Was there a native independence in him, a clearness of vision which, roused, convinced by the strange and compelling arguments which had come so suddenly into his life, was strong enough to shake off the grip of prejudice, training, social usage, resist ambition in its brightest guise and cause him to take a stand independent and unique? Her girlish ardor, her woman's ambition—something maternal and brooding within her plead for this triumph for Duncan.

She saw much good in him in the championship of the unhappy little creature for whom he had craved her interest. She was happy to co-operate in a work that meant perhaps

salvation for an abandoned woman and a new spiritual vision for Duncan. She promised to visit the hospital as soon as he could arrange for her to call. He suggested, and she agreed that it would be best for him to see Glad first, and pave the way for admitting another into the confidence of her pitiful tragedy.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Marlinee was one of those who find the viewpoint of the pro-liquor people almost impossible of appreciation. The circumstances of her life made it so.

She was born in Kansas, and reared under a prohibition regime. Marlinee, in a village of 6,000 or so had not seen a drunk man until she was twelve years old. The children of the neighborhood came flying into their homes in fright at sight of the staggering, mumbling, individual moving laboriously along their quiet street. They thought him a crazy man.

Environment, custom, and training equipped the girl with latent prohibition principles, but her convictions were not wholly imposed ones. Her first impressions in a country where those principles were violated in the most matter of fact way afforded a shock to her sensibilities, and indignation to her sense of justice, emphasized her convictions and lent to them all the vigor and revolt of which her sensitive mind was capable. One of these impressions was received in her first month in the Journal. She was pursuing a narrow street of Riverdale, a short cut in the business section, when a prostrate object in a half open door suddenly blocked her way and caused her to start in fright. It was a man sprawled on the ground. His head was thrust into the angle formed by the door and the wall and bent half under him. His eyes were shut, his mouth open, gaping. A thin trickle of blood was running from his forehead. The girl shrank back and circled involuntarily around him, then she turned, bending over him in shrinking horror. Her thought was that he was dead.

Her dismayed ejaculation brought a man to the door and she saw it was the door of a bar-room—the rear door. The man was the bar-keeper. He was smirk and clean in imm aculate

apron, plastered hair and heavy perfumery. He looked indifferently at the frightened girl and stepped around to the object outside. He moved it with his foot, gingerly, as though it were a carcass. Then he looked within and made a sharp jesture with his thumb to someone. A man with a star on his coat lounged leisurely out. The bar-keeper gave him a shrewd wink as he emerged and pointed to the prostrate form of the man. The officer with an oath, siezed him by the arm and kicked him, snivelling and staring to his feet.

Marlinee fled up the alley. She burst out into the wide street where men and women were causually taking their way. Her heart was beating against her sides. She was faint; her throat felt as though hands clutched it. She groped her way to the office of the Journal and staggered in. She dropped in the chair opposite the city editor. He looked up startled at her white face.

"Why, what is it?" he asked in concern. The girl gripped her throat where her indignation burned like a flame. She closed her eyes in the excess of her faintness and horror. "Oh," she panted. "Out there! Out there I saw something terrible!"

"What—where?" the news instinct siezed the city editor. He forgot the girl and dashed out of the building. In a moment he was back. He sat down laughing, and eyed Marlinee with some wonder.

"Aw—that! Why, that was just a drunk they're taking over to the police station." The girl stared at him a moment speechless.

"That's *all*, you say—*all*! And you—a *man*! Why, he lay there—horrible—like a dead man, his mouth in the dirt, blood trickling! I thought he was dead. And while I looked and was just going to cry out *he* came—the man inside—so smirk and clean, and he touched him with his foot—he who *made* him that way—as though he wasn't fit—as though he was a dog.

And the other kicked him. Oh!—if I were his mother—that man's—I would *kill* them. * * * * And then they take him to the police and make him pay the city money, for making him that way. Oh—I hate men—I *hate* them!" She dropped her head in her hands and her body shook with sudden sobs.

The editor looked at her in astonishment and discomfiture. There was no one else about—it was the noon hour. He was glad. He couldn't think just what he ought to do. Then a light fell upon him. He remembered something and he laughed reassuringly:

"Aw, cheer up!" he said, "I wouldn't take it so hard. You're a little Jayhawker, aren't you?—one of those Kansas folks that aren't used to such things? You stay in California a while and you'll get used to a little thing like that." He was glad that the telephone rang. When he was done talking she had gone.

Marlinee "got used" to such things, in a way, but not in the way the city editor prophesied. Her life in the office and on the street inured her to such sights, but never lent immunity to the horror of it. It was this incident that prompted pulling up her wine grape vines. It was a relief to her feelings to do one radical deed, put in one telling stroke against the whisky interests. She would gladly have handled the spade and grub-hook herself, to help rid the world of such a monstrous institution of injustice: the conscious destruction of human life and character in the name of business!

Her's was an idealism, the direct opposite of the motive that maintains the liquor business. Such materialism was her natural enemy, realized and scorned by every instinct of her being. It was to be a thing met in many other phases than that of the liquor industry; in the worldliness to which her work as a reporter introduced her; in the self-seeking policies and compromises disovered in the business and political world; even in the churches and the institutions that stood, presumably

for the very opposite motives, she too often recognized the subtle influence of material appeal—the compromise for the end of popularity and advancement.

These were the things her young, sensitive soul discovered in her daily encounters; disillusionizing things, things that first startled and amazed and then overwhelmed with a great pain and disappointment.

The moral travail of a supersensitive mind is unintelligible to the man or woman of blunt sensibilities, but to thousands in whom the enduring ideals are the only realities, the suffering that the inexperienced girl endured in her apprenticeship in a world wholly unexplored—the real world she had never known —will be understood and appreciated.

But new things came to the rescue of her disappointed mind: more understanding of human nature; the taking into consideration of circumstances. It helped to lend ease to the hurt of many things. This capacity for a shifting viewpoint was the thing that saved her friendship with Duncan. Or perhaps it was Duncan's friendship—the frank affection she bore for him—that necessitated her acknowledgment of another viewpoint.

Their first and last encounter on the liquor question was precipitated by her action in regard to her vineyard. Duncan amplified the justification of the industry in a peroration that would have done credit to his father. In fact it was a transcript in every way of Cameron's arguments. Marlinee listened and was not impressed. In fact her indignation grew together with a haughty feeling of superiority in her own judgments—Duncan's arguments were so wholly lacking in originality. But afterwards, and many times in the future, she honestly endeavored to put herself in Duncan's place—in the place of every man or woman to whom the use of alcoholic beverages is an every day affair, for she decided that custom

and inherited prejudice were the only things that could excuse the persistence of men and women in a licensed regime that constituted such a menace to themselves and hurt to thousands of their fellow men.

But it was a difficult—a well-nigh impossible task. How can one into whose daily life as a domestic item, wine has never come, appreciate the place it and kindred beverages take in homes where it is in daily use? How could Marlinee who was primarily social yet to whose sociability wine drinking had never been a conceivable necessity, understand the household where the hand extended in greeting and the one reaching for the decanter constitute the same act of hospitality. She tried, but it was hard and her best efforts were continually frustrated by the recurring examples of the evil of the thing, the examples afforded her every day; Hayward, the smartest man on the force who was tempting incapacitation by the booze route; Wakefield, the wreck that weaved his senile way into the office periodically, and, button-holing the boys, begged with alcoholic emotion, in the name of the old days, to stake him to one more drink; Middleson, the best criminal attorney in the state who gave them the year's scoop and an extra in a notoriously dry week, by blowing his brains out in the Commerce building after a ten days' spree; the leakings of smart society that betrayed things not designed for the society page, or Mrs. B's maid from which porous source they came.

"Stupidity! Stupidity!" Marlinee's indignant mind cried. "One half of the world licensing the other half to destroy it, and pocketing the money with a gratified smile, as though it were a huge bargain."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The problem of Glad's immediate future had been simplified by the culmination indicated by the doctor, but the future was yet gravely precarious and even doubtful and for a time it seemed that it would be solved by the Presence that in such cases as Glad's appears, if it comes, in the guise of a friend rather than a foe. Long after there was no doubt of the girl's physical recovery, her mind remained in a condition of distress and agitation, serious and pathetic. The girl had received one of those mental and spiritual shocks, the more disastrous as the object is sensitive and receptive.

Duncan or Marlinee visited her daily—often together. They brought her as much self-forgetfulness as they could provide by cheerful presence, books, pictures and enlivening talk. Marlinee had won her from the first. To Duncan she clung with the desperation of one who is hanging above an abyss. Twice he had come on call from the nurse, when her mind seemed threatened and his presence had calmed her. She looked with eager expectation for their appearance, but after their first greeting that brought a faint smile and a glimpse of old color to her cheeks, she fell into silence, allowing them the responsibility of conversation. And while they engaged in animated and companionable talk she sat back among her pillows observing them in a sort of dreamy compassion as of one many years older in years and experience, the sad tears standing in her eyes. Altogether her progress was not satisfactory, and the two friends plotted the annexation of a new ally. The suggestion came from a conversation reported by Marlinee.

"You work at the Sun office?" Glad questioned her one day. A sad confusion of ideas was one of the things that characterized her condition.

"No, at the Journal," corrected Marl'nee, gently.

"The Journal!" A soft flush diffused Glad's little face and she brightened. "I know a boy on the Journal—I used to know him," she added sadly. "His name was Norris."

"Norris!" exclaimed Marlinee. "Why, yes, Freddie Norris—and one of our best men. Freddie is all right!"

"He's awfully nice," agreed Glad softly. "He was awfully good to me. I—I liked him." Her eyes filled suddenly and she said no more.

After they had c.mpared notes—Duncan reciting the girl's first reference to Norris—they decided to solicit the boy in a triple alliance to the end of Glad's recovery.

"Norris never meant any harm, if he did lose his head," said Duncan, referring to Glad's first version of their acquaintance. "He's as clean and fine a chap as I know—at least he was when I left last fall."

"He is yet, he's a *dear*," answered Marlinee. Norris was one of her enthusiasms.

"There's only this," hesitated Duncan. "She's been so terribly hurt, once, and she seems to have a real affection for Norris. Suppose she should fall in love with him. I wouldn't want her to have any more troubles, poor little girl."

"Suppose she *should* fall in love with him, and suppose he should fall in love with her." There is a matchmaker in the heart of every normal woman, and Marlinee had her own concerns for little Norris. "She is beautiful, she is charming. This thing—it, it was nothing of her own inviting. It's like some terrible accident for which the victim is not to blame, some disfiguring accident, but if a man's love is strong enough and deep enough, and the object is worthy, he wont think of that. It will make his love even a stronger and more tender thing." Thus spoke Marlinee in the wisdom of her years.

"Glad and Norris are well mated. They are each rare;

Norris is young—too young to be in the newspaper game," she added anxiously. "It would be the best thing in the world for him to settle down early and he couldn't find a more adorable little thing to work for than Glad." Duncan laughed, long and hard. Marlinee was disgusted. She pushed out her chin and walked haughtily two steps ahead. He made a long step and was beside her.

"Mad?" he quoted, after the manner of their youngster days. "But it *was* funny! Heavens! Marlinee, you talked like seventy and grayhaired. And I'm jealous. All this concern transferred to little Norris, and I used to be your only object of solicitude."

"*Only*! Well that's some conceit!" flashed Marlinee. She was blushing.

"Oh, well—almost only," amended Duncan, lamely.

So Norris was elected to Glad's cause. Norris was an epitome of spring. There was a glow about him like the sun on a green meadow; his eyes were like spring pools. His hair swept back from his forehead as though he were pressing against the wind, he had a way of shaking it like an eager horse beginning a race. His nostrils seemed always to be scenting delight. His unusual beauty took hold of all, from the soda fountain girls that handed him his order with an air of caress, to the bat-eyed janitor of his boarding place, who waited mornings with the eagerness of a silly girl, to hear his not too respectful greeting. And Norris' well of joy consisted in the fact that he was cub reporter on the Riverdale Journal at sixteen dollars a week, with the duties of a roust-about man, but with prospects.

Marlinee sounded him concerning Glad the following day after press time. Norris was munching at a box of chocolate wafers, a substitude for his omitted luncheon, and was meditating the lead paragraph for his story. The two, surprisingly, had the office to themselves.

"Do you know Glad Garrison?" Marlinee asked, abruptly.

"Glad Garrison?" Norris disposed of three wafers at once and answered under difficulties. "Glad Garrison, that little fountain peacherino up at the Inglenook? Or she used to be there. She's the cutest little Chicken that ever toed it down the pike!" Marlinee eyed the boy with disgust. For the first time since her acquaintance with Norris she disapproved of him. This young princeling preening himself in a new suit of beach flannels; this fledgling with the itch of his first moustache; this new man jauntily phrasing men's age-old assumption concerning women. Norris, finishing the box, was blissfully unaware of Marlinee's reservations. "What happened to the little girl?" he asked, airily.

"She's dying, that's all," answered Marlinee, her disgust provoking brutality.

"What!" The boy dropped the pencil he was toying with. His face had gone white. "How?"

"How?" Marlinee was relentless. "Why, by the perfidy of man, that's all. Men, who assume that all young unprotected girls are 'Chickens,' 'Dolls,' and their natural victims."

"Say—you don't mean that!" Norris was on his feet. His concern was unmistakable. "Who—when—I'd like to meet the wretch, damn him! Why she was good, darn it, she was absolutely sweet and good!" A blush stole under his fair skin. "Why, that little girl—Say, Miss Marlinee—I knew that little girl and thought a lot of her! I used to take her out, a little, and I would have more only—oh, well! Say, she's all right and the man who did her harm is a damnable dog.

"Why, do you know," he was bending toward her, confidingly, with the concern and earnestness in his eyes that lent him his lovableness. "I don't mind telling *you*. It was because I kissed her that she got sore at me. That's how straight she is." Marlinee's eyes interrogated coldly.

"Oh, you don't understand!" he cried. "You know *me*, surely! I'm a man, of course," he apologized for the accident, "but I'm not a cad or a brute. She had such pretty ways about her and such a darn pretty little mouth. And she trusted me," his shoulders went back adorably. "She treated me just like her brother and once she kissed me," Norris grew rather incoherent at this point, "a darn funny little kiss on the mouth, just like a little kid, and it sort of turned my head. Funny that a girl would kiss *you*, but it would make her mad if you kissed *her*. But I scared her, or hurt her feelings or something. She wouldn't let me explain and she wouldn't have anything to do with me after that. I felt awfully sore about it, especially when I heard of her going around with some girls in the shop and their friends, she oughtened to have had anything to do with. I went to her one day and tried to warn her, but darn it if she didn't turn around and remind me of what I'd done! Said I needn't be afraid for her. I'd taught her what men were like. The man ought to be sent up—if he could be found. Maybe I can find him while I'm on my beat. If we could find him and have him arrested or something!" Marlinee smiled at the boy's eagerness.

"If we could find him we would hardly want to give the affair and the little girl publicity." Norris' face fell. "Besides," pursued Marlinee, (the incidents of the newspaper woman's life inures her to the discussion of indelicate things and she wanted Norris fully enlightened) "Besides, *It* didn't live to be born and there's hope for her, if she can be roused, if she can be made to feel that there's anything to live for—that life will be kind toward her. Her trouble has sort of forced her intelligence and she is a child-woman suffering with all the sensitiveness of both natures. She spoke of you, that's the reason I mentioned her."

"Oh, say, did she though?—poor, little kid!" said Norris.

"She spoke of you to Duncan, too. He knows her. She was a sister of his chum back in Yale. Duncan and I are her only friends here—and you. We've been trying to cheer her up and help her live. We thought maybe you would help us. She spoke as though she was rather fond of you."

"Say, did she?" asked Norris, eagerly. "Well I'll sure do all I can. Go an' see her or do anything you like."

"That's good. She's at the Good Samaritan Hospital and you can go out with me to-morrow night if you will."

The enlisting of Norris in Glad's cause proved an inspiration. The suggestion that he call was first made by Marlinee. Glad shrank back, in dismay.

"No," she said—"Oh, no!" her hand went up to her face in a frightened way, as though warding off something. Her sensitiveness, her involuntary assigning of herself to the position of one scorned, abhorred, was a pathetic characteristic of her mental condition. It showed how deep and vital had been the blow to her self-respect.

"He would know, he would despise me and I couldn't stand it—I liked him." Her eyes filled with the tears, that were always just below the surface. She looked very babyish and appealing in her distress and Marlinee embraced her with a quick maternal caress.

"Darling—don't feel so! Norris couldn't hate you. He couldn't hate anyone, he's such a dear boy! Beside, he knows about it already." She felt Glad tremble and her little hands tighten in a frightened way upon her. "He feels terribly about it for he likes you. He feels sort of to blame, too, for having frightened you once, and for not having warned you of this man."

"Oh!" Glad gave a little trembling sigh of relief and Marlinee laid her back gently and eased the pillows under her head.

"He mustn't feel that way," protested Glad, "he wasn't to

blame really. He was very dear and sweet and I was silly. It was my fault anyway; I teased him. He was good to me and if I hadn't been foolish and gotten mad at him I wouldn't have had anything to do with the *other*, perhaps, and everything would have been all right." The tears were coming, now, dropping slowly from beneath her closed lids. Marlinee kissed her impetuously and held her soft little hand in hers, smoothing it gently as she talked. Glad seemed to be always slipping away from them and to need to be kissed back into life.

"Anyway dear, he's coming in just fifteen minutes—so you mustn't cry any more and you must sit up and let me fix your hair in the prettiest way possible and put on the scrumptious little pink kimona I bought for you yesterday."

There was no resisting Norris. He left not a moment for self-consciousness. From the door, he jollied her. He sat down on the edge of the bed and "rubbered" ostentatiously at the new kimona, holding the timid little hand Glad gave him deliberately, between both his own. He pronounced the new kimona a "peach" and the girl inside it of similiar quality. He flung himself into a chair and inspected with attention the objects on the stand near by, sniffing at the medicine bottles, dashing through the magazines and prying hopefully into a candy box with disappointing results. That reminded him that he had brought some, himself, and he produced it and shelled the caramels for Glad, pushing them into her resisting little mouth when politeness prompted her refusal of more. He stayed just fifteen minutes, but his visit was so salutary that the patient surprised the nurse by her appetite at supper and fell asleep early with a smile on her face and a faint flush on her cheeks instead of tears.

And Glad continued to improve, with short relapses. She anticipated Norris' frequent calls with flushed and happy expectancy, but sometimes in his presence, fell into the same

pathetic revery as with her other friends and always she received him, and his ardor, his raillery and his increasingly affectionate attentions, with a distantness, a voluntary reserve, designed apparently to remind him of the experiences through which she had passed and the impossibility of any real renewal of their former relations.

Marlinee regretted Glad's supersensitiveness, while appreciating it. In her enthusiasm she would have had no barrier put in the way of Norris' evident and increasing regard for the girl. Things were going exactly as she had anticipated and planned and she was delighted. Duncan, however, was glad for the child's attitude. It showed more strength of character than he had expected in her and guarded Norris against temptation to his sufficiently ardent and quixotic temper. If he overruled the girl's discretion and won her, the responsibility would be his. Duncan did not want that responsibility himself. Norris was young and his impetuosity now, might suggest what his later judgment would have rejected. He hoped earnestly that there might be no unhappy results from Marlinee's having brought them together. His own affairs called for his time and with Glad improving he turned the child's interests largely over to Norris and Marlinee. He had the matter of Blythe's proposed partnership to decide upon and another and still more engrossing interest: Corinne.

His love for the latter was in no way compromised by his platonic intercourse with Marlinee. Marlinee was his friend, his little sister. Corinne understood the relationship, though, as a matter of fact, Corrine failed to recognize it with cordiality. It was the only flaw he recognized in Corinne's perfection—her attitude toward Marlinee. He could have wished she might have shown more graciousness toward her.

There was in reality a subtler antagonism between the two girls, the primal antagonism of sex. They were the antipodes

in every physical and moral quality. Each was a type of superculture of the times: Corinne, that of the material, Marlinee, the spiritual. Corinne's manner of life catered to the senses; she represented the race of pampered women, whose lives are smoothed by bodily luxuries, and serving hands. She was exotic, languorous and beautiful.

Marlinee came from a family who toiled with hand and brain. Her delicacy was more of temperament than of body. Her slender form held an endurance wanting in more robust individuals. Her spirit was the energy of her being. Yet the primal instincts in the super-idealistic girl were healthy. She was less passionate than Corinne, but more normal; possessed of the sex need not only of conquest but of family and offspring. There was little of the vanity of coquetry in her.

The subjugation of Duncan's youthful mind by Corinne had been complete. Before his daring ambitions toward her had developed he had considered her from his obscurity with an admiration that found no source of expression. The luxurious little girl in her rich frocks and beribboned curls had been his youthful dream. She embodied all glamor, richness and romance. From his obscurity he worshipped as a votary at a distant shrine. She seemed utterly beyond and above him. He saw other boys approach her with awe. Douglas handing her into the pony cart, or riding beside her in free and easy comradship filled him with wonder and admiration of his brother's daring.

Duncan confided his heart affairs to no one, not even Marlinee. It was not that he felt the least embarrassment between the friendship of the two girls. He lacked the egotism of most men that would have conceived a rivalry. Marlinee and Corinne supplied in his life, so long barren, two needs, the former comfort—the latter luxury.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

In the following weeks Duncan visited almost all the establishments in which Blythe had an interest. To many of them he went alone, with *carte blanc* from the latter to investigate every department thoroughly. Blythe himself showed him through a number and on these occasions Duncan received the benefit of that large knowledge and shrewd business sense that had made the man's success.

Had there been no other object in view than an educational one Duncan would have felt the time well spent. He had liked Blythe less than any of his father's friends. A certain crudeness about him, a blatant egotism, jarred on his sensibilities but he was ready, by the time their tour of inspection was over, to acknowledge that Blythe had some cause for his conceit. And Blythe had, on these trips, exhibited a geniality very ingratiating, a power of entertainment quite unexpected. He had related to Duncan the story of his own life which was practically identical with the story of the wine industry in California.

He hadn't started out to be a wine man. He had originally herded a bunch of sheep on a few acres of land he owned in the foothills and had for a time about as hard picking as the sheep. But the sheep multiplied and he bought more land. Then somebody said his land would bring more in vineyard acreage and told him about the wonderful prospects of a big California wine industry, a market for American supply.

He knew there was money in the liquor business. He had parted with a good deal, himself, at the Riverdale saloons, when he went to town. He never begrudged the saloons a cent. He had an iron constitution provided for by the hills and hardy Yankee stock. Wine, he knew must, since it was a gentleman's

drink, bring a lot more money than beer or whisky and it seemed as if the man that grew the grapes to make the wine might have a good thing. He turned a few acres of his land over into vineyard, still holding his sheep, however. At first there was something in it, then the California Wine Association gained control. He joined his neighbors in the co-operative association organized at Cameron's place, that had met the fate of most of the "Co-ops" and, shortly, was forced to throw up the sponge.

In his skirmishes with the Wine Association, however, he had learned something, namely, that he was on the wrong track, in the wrong branch of the liquor business for money making purposes. There was money in it, but not as a producer. Therefore he took rapid steps to enter the right line. He was possessed of no fool's ideals, like Cameron, that kept him at a business that wouldn't pay, just because he had started at it. He had been beaten in his game against big business and he decided to follow exactly the course suggested by Whitten to the Missourian: to sit in with the winners at their own game.

He sold the few acres of vineyard he had, together with most of his land, at excellent profit, to individuals still possessed of the delusion that there was money in wine grape growing. He kept his serviceable bunch of sheep all this time and had an enviable bank account as a result. He invested this, some of it, in California Wine Association stock, and a lot of it in other lines of the liquor business, the dividends of which were worth while. He had wholesale houses at San Francisco, Stockton and Sacramento and up and down the valley, also at Los Angeles. He owned saloons in each city, together with his new enterprises, the cafes, cabarets and other refreshment places. He had an interest in almost all of the independent wineries, the few that had survived in the fight against the wine trust.

Between these and the latter, existed a compromise, a compromise that practically amounted to an alliance. In every case the so-called independents held contracts with the monoply by which they disposed of their goods to the latter.

The trust had won. It held, hard and fast, the lines of the entire wine business of California. The independents were the children playing with the ends of the lines and the grower sat on the fence and watched the wagon go by. He didn't even get a ride, for, more and more, as Mr. Cummings had indicated, the production itself was in the hands of the trust, either by means of its own increasing vineyards or the vineyard owners to whom it had loaned money.

This was the story painted in Blythe's picturesque phraseology, for the sheep herder was apt to emerge and banish the millionaire when Blythe was engaged in self-discourse. It was a story, in reality, known to Duncan before, and one that held an immense fascination, for romance lives in the commercial struggle as well as in physical warfare. Blythe, Cummings and their fellows had surrendered, but as peers of the conquerors. They had shown on the field of commercial battle the prowess equal to their enemy, the keenness, the foresight, the strategic genius required by commercial war. What they had lacked was the required armament to make the fight win, namely, capital, combination of capital.

So Blythe was now with the Survivors, the commercially fit, and Duncan was bidden to join these brave, battle-hardened veterans. He was filled with pride and happiness at the honor. The issue had changed. He thought, with regret, of the vineyard and of his father's ideals for it, of the gentle unworldliness of the latter's visions. But his father had not lived into his son's time, the time that called for a ready eye, and a strong fist, the equipment of a fighter, instead of a dreamer. His father would not have deterred him, he would, himself,

have recognized the change in the times and that the way to a name and a place was by a different path than that taken half a century before. His father, like Mr. Cummings would wish him God-speed in his new departure.

These trips with Blythe, were not only educationally stimulating, they were a holiday, recalling Duncan's boyhood days and associations. The wineries had always held a fascination for him, the great buildings, in the wine making season, seething with activity and the confusion of rich odors, the loads of grapes moving from all directions along the country roads, industrial streams flowing toward one yawning intake, the days breathing urgency, wholesome activity and the fellowship of many workers. But the dead season of the wineries held equal interest for Duncan as a child. A mystery invested the big storage sheds as they stood, silent, day after day, month after month, under the brooding sun or the driving rains; a little languid movement in office and warehouse. One stepped inside and looked down the far, dim vistas, richly redolent of the vintage within, stored in mammoth tanks, roof-high, that stood in parallel rows like rotund giants, dreaming on sentinel line.

"And they'd put all this out of business!" exclaimed Blythe. They were in the store house of one of the oldest plants of the valley, whose solid oak tanks, staring at them like dish-faced dwarfs, read 1882. "Throw it all out, the contents and equipment of the entire plant, and of all the plants of the state that represent over a million dollars worth of property, a life time of work and industry and fight, and the wages of thousands of men; throw it all out like so much junk on the scrap pile! These prohibitionists—they have the intellect of a pea-nut and the heart of a parsnip!"

In the mind of Duncan the same significance had been growing as day after day he was reminded of the value and importance

of the business. These things had been a part of his knowledge always, since he had been old enough to know the industry, and necessarily it was the economic arguments of the wine business he had wielded in his persuasion of the congressmen. But to see the thing with his own eyes, as represented in the many plants and business houses visited, was impressive.

Yet in view of the possible catastrophe—the passing of the Dry amendment, he had thought with relief, that the equipment of the wineries and breweries was not as valuable as the machinery employed in most manufactories, nor, he was forced to admit, were the numbers given employment as high as might be expected from a business of such scale. Also there was no such technical skill and specialized knowledge required by the workers in the wine and liquor business as in the textile mills, the glass or furniture factories which held complicated and delicate machinery, calling for the employment of skilled workmen, the men whose education and habits made specialization. The brewery worker or winery hand could find employment for his brain and muscle anywhere, in field or warehouse; the barkeeper ought to make a good restuarant man, or seller of retail goods of any sort. In the fruit orchards sufficient white help was not obtainable. He had been put to it, to keep his rule of employing only Americans or men American by birth, as were his Mexican help. The argument concerning labor, was, he admitted, weak, and he had put little stress upon it.

Another thing worried him a bit. A reconsideration of his own financial figures used at Washington, in the zeal of his campaign, including the estimate of property rendered worthless should the amendment carry, proved that they were somewhat exaggerated. He had used the figures forwarded him by the California Wine Association and had supposed them to be correct but when he came to consider them calmly he found a serious error. State-wide prohibition, serious as it would be

to the liquor interests, did not mean that $150,000,000 worth of property, would be made worthless, as claimed by the Wets. Nor would 170,000 acres of land be left valueless. Such talk, if it *was* from his side, if he *had* used it, was nosense. It failed to take into consideration the value of the wine people's property for other purposes. Buildings and real estate would not be destroyed by state wide prohibition as by a fire. The acreage in vineyards could be used to even better advantage, in the raising of table grapes, raisin grapes and deciduous fruits, at the present price paid the wine grape grower for his product. The increasing acreage of these products throughout the valley, where once wine grapes had been grown, proved that.

He felt annoyed at his use of the exaggerations; he did not care to win by falsity. There were enough reasons for the continuation of the industry without the use of overdrawn arguments. His own personal arguments for the industry and the privilege of drinking was that of "personal liberty," the injustice and foolishness of people legislating out a custom of pleasure and benefit to the many, because some were too weak to make use of it with discretion. He spoke to Blythe now, of the discrepancies in the financial argument:

"Hum—that so? I hadn't noticed it. Well, never mind. The prohibitionists inflate their figures, all right. All this sentimental gush of theirs about the poor drunkard and his family is overdrawn and they know it."

"I don't know about that," said Duncan, thoughtfully. "I have always been willing to concede the prohibitionists their viewpoint, based on certain undebatable facts, the same as ours. Those particular facts have been brought to my notice in a most unhappy way recently. Seems funny—just fresh from a victory for our side these things have fairly been rubbed into me lately—to put the case far too lightly. One thing after

another has happened in a straight stretch—Morton, Antonio and the case of which I spoke to you the other day.

"Don't misunderstand me. I'm not ready to say, by any means, that because some weaklings come to grief—and terrible grief—through the misuse of this thing that an institution that has contributed to the happiness and welfare of so many people, intrinsically and by the industry, should be wiped out. But it's no wonder, taking specific cases such as I've had to consider lately, that over-emotional people size the thing up that way and say it's prohibition or nothing. The fact is, there's a lot to be said on their side. Human life *is* something to think of as opposed to business, and certain sacrifices are demanded by the strong."

"Well, what would you say?" asked Blythe with some impatience.

"Why, I'd say that we, who are responsible for the industry, should put a lot more safe-guards around it. *We* should not leave it to the reformers to do. And we should see that the laws we already have are enforced. Here in three cases in which I'm more or less involved are three direct infractions of the law; *good* laws, too, I consider them, if they *were* put on us by the other side. Here's Bernardini doing practically a retail business out on his winery and debauching the whole neighborhood, encouraging boot-legging by that neat evasion such men have, nothing less than two gallons at a time, and that delivered direct to the family by an employee, but you know the trick. Morton signs up for the delivery on the spot and totes the goods off across the road where the help booze on it.

"That business was directly responsible for Antonio's drunk and the Hindoo's death. When I got the whole story, I fired Morton. It was the least I could do, but it was hard. He's been in our family for years and married one of the finest girls

in the country—she was from my mother's home in Scotland. It makes me sick when I think of her and the children.

"And then this little girl I told you about. There's another vicious, damnable association we've got to get rid of in the liquor business. If I thought I d ever come to where I'd draw an income that included in it the debauching of young girls I'd go and hang myself right now!" He spoke with all the concentrated scorn he felt; Glad's wan little face, with it's expression of misery haunted him.

Blythe eyed him covertly. The boy's grim mouth and set jaw,the first unconsciously clenched—here was a man of motive and purpose, of emotional capacity—"a damned amount of emotion he took from his sentimental, highstrung dad," Blythe meditated. He had never liked Cameron. His superiority irritated him. He felt uneasy in his presence. What virtues he, himself, had—his shrewdness and practical ability—seemed deprecated by Cameron's brilliancy and refinement. He was jealous of the man's gifts while he held in contempt his idealism, his lack of the worldly motive. It was not for love of Cameron that he had made the offer to Duncan of his partnership. His motive was one of cold business foresight; the recognition of just those qualities of strength that seemed about to evade him. He read Duncan better than himself and understood the tugging of those admirable qualities of sympathy, chivalry and altruism that characterized the father. He must have a care. He must try on this opportunity of close association to turn Duncan's mind into safer channels. Compromise might do something.

"It was a damned devilish thing," he agreed. You say she was a good girl, straight and all right? You know these women, they're devilish deceitful some times. You can't always tell." Duncan was offended.

"I'm very certain of this child," he said with dignity. "I

know her family, at least her brother. He was my room-mate at Yale. I used to see her in her home. She was a beautiful little creature, of perfect breeding and with the unsuspecting innocence that would permit of just this sort of catastrophe. I want to find the man, that's all, I just want to get my hands on him once!"

"There'd be a funeral—say?" Blythe laughed. He was trying to be sympathetic. Duncan did not answer. Again he had shown more of his emotions and revealed more of Glad's story than he intended.

"You say that happened at the Parisian?" asked Blythe, suddenly. "Well, I happen to own an interest in the Parisian and I'll confess that this is wholly new to me. I'll tell you what I'll do," he continued, with largeness. I'll investigate this matter. I sure will and I'll see that this sort of thing doesn't happen again. We can't afford it, let alone the wrong of it. It won't do. I put my money into the proposition with the idea that it would be run on a high-class, strictly moral basis. I'm indebted to you for telling me about this, really. I'm confoundedly sorry about the little girl, too," he added with real feeling. Duncan felt easier. There was no reason, after all, why he should not have made a confidant of Blythe. The latter might be rather coarse and hold the wordly view-point to excess, perhaps, but he had a good heart, and his words might result in effecting a reform in the cafe that would save some other innocent girl. He was glad he had spoken.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Duncan, although characteristically reserved concerning his own personal affairs, took the matter of his offer from Blythe to two friends, Marlinee and Mr. Cummings. Habit incited his confiding his prospects to the former, friendship and his faith in the latter as a man of large business knowledge and success in his own enterprise incited him to seek the counsel of the latter. Mr. Cummings made no effort to conceal his surprise and pleasure at Duncan's disclosures.

"My boy, I congratulate you!" he cried, gripping Duncan's hand with the friendliness and fatherly affection so grateful to the younger man. "This is great. Of course you will not hesitate to accept. I must tell Mrs. Cummings and Corinne—you don't mind? They will be as proud as I am for you."

Duncan blushed. He was not wholly unwordly. In the background of his thoughts had been the realization of what this sudden rise in his material prospects might mean to his heart ambitions. But he had not been quite prepared for the eagerness with which Mr. Cummings received his news and his immediate reference to Corinne. He had a degree of personal pride and would have resented the idea of his prospects hanging wholly on material conditions. Yet he told himself that Corinne had been delicately raised; money, luxury, were second nature to her and the proper demand of so sumptuous and regal a young creature. Mr. Cummings was right in expecting of his prospective son-in-law that he make good in a wordly sense.

"Well, sit down—sit down. Let's talk this over. We'll leave the ladies till later, as the dessert of the occasion," cried Mr. Cummings, wheeling an easy chair up before the large book-strewn table of his library where he had led Duncan.

"So you came to talk it over and ask my advice. Well, I've given it to you. Go at it, my boy, you are on the right track—the only one, I may add. I want to say that I've had you in mind for a long time. I wanted to do something myself, Duncan, to help you out of your financial difficulties and give you the start that your ability and powers deserve, but it was impossible. I don't know that you know what a fight I've made for what I've got." Mr. Cummings was one of the few independents who retained his original business under his own name. "Within two weeks I will have given up the game—sold out to the California Wine Association. They'll take over my business for a generous consideration, and a block of stock in their organization and I'll assume the innocuous role of retired wine maker and viticulturalist, practically the same as the one you consider, only you come out better. By Blythe's generosity your name becomes associated with one of the biggest liquor men in the state, biggest in point of financial standing, influence and all round administrative ability. Don't hesitate a moment, my boy. Your father wouldn't ask you to. You relinquish his vineyard ambition to write his name big and ineffacably on the role of great business accomplishments in this country.

"And its the only way, as I said before, by all the tendencies of the times and the experience of the wine industry in particular. There is nothing in it for the grower, nothing for the independent wine-maker. Consolidation, co-operation of big business is the watchword today. I'ts inevitable in our business and the only road to success. The little man has to go. It seems hard but it's the old story. It's nature's law and as such, is surely good."

Duncan pondered and his face showed doubt. He was no Socialist. He held their altruistic doctrines in some scorn and all his prejudices and tendencies were on the side of the bigger

man. He belonged to one of the families of the financial conquerors, in whom wealth and brains had served to outstrip their fellows and seize the advantages of each generation to pass them on to the next generation. Even now he admired that struggle in the person of Blythe and Cummings whose surrender was only that of compromise.

But this doctrine was different—the antithesis of the Socialists' theory. He was not prepared for this, either, for it meant by the consolidation of the forces of the conquerors and their resources the elimination of personal prowess—of brain pitted against brain in fair fight. Enunciated in the person of this humane, kindly man—it was incongruous, distasteful. Cummings read his thought in his eyes and continued.

"This doctrine of the equalization of opportunity and of wealth, you and I know is all nonsense. The man with the brain will make the get away, every time, give him half a chance. It isn't the money or the power, its *brains*, man's resourceful brains. I heard a politician the other day—not a Socialist, by the way—trying to prove that it was the laws, wrong laws, that provided for monoply, for much of our once public lands being in private or corporation hands. He cited the instance of the grants made to the Northern Pacific Railroad and to the Southern Pacific, by which the Government parted with oil bearing and other valuable lands. 'Now there,' he said, 'is a case of laws, *wrong* laws, permitting the monoply of public resources. You'll have to get after the law makers, get men who will make *right* laws, and everything will be all right.' In other words, presumably, vote for him and his fellow candidates of the 'out' party. And the funny part of it was that every case he cited proved conclusively the triumph of the mind of the individual behind the law, the mind of the man who plotted to have men make the law to his advantage and keep it on the statute books against the protest of the people; the vivid, un-

tiring, all conquering, all resourceful personality of the men in the corporation, working inexorably to accomplish their end.

"Brains will win every time, and the men with superior brains will put the strength of those brains together to win. But it works out for good to all in the long run. If the little man can't make money by running a little store, he can, by working for the man with the big store and he can *save* money by patronizing the big company that, by running a big business, can afford to put the goods down to the little man's price."

"But suppose they don't put the goods down to where the little man can reach them?" interposed Duncan, "*That's* the trouble!"

"Why, there's just the chance for men like you to get in your work. *You* in the big business and *I* in the big business can keep that business within bounds; can say that our power shall not be used at the expense of our patrons—by putting our prices up. Combination and control accomplishes wealth for the big interest even at reasonable price of retail goods."

"Sure! And if the big liquor interests would let some of the surplus get by to the producer, you could have stayed in business as an independent and I as a grower!" cried Duncan, with spirit. "*Why not*?"

"Why not, my boy? Just because of what I have been saying. Brains will build, brains will co-operate with brains for the good of themselves—for the ultimate good of all. One-half the world is meant to serve the other half. The men who serve and those who are served are equally benefited, or rather the terms are interchangeable; it doesn't make any difference whether you and I are the big men or the little men, we belong to the splendid co-operative concern of the Almighty and He looks on his work and apparently calls it good."

Duncan pondered the proposition. It was keenly put and in many ways it was sound.

"No, Duncan, my boy," Cummings was saying, "to return to the concrete, there's nothing in the wine industry for the grower or the small manufacturer. That day, short enough, is passed. There is money, big money, honest money, in the wholesale business and its accompaniment of the retail. There is money in shares of the California Wine Association and the few strong independent wineries, so called."

"And the vineyards; who will grow the grapes?"

"Some eighty percent of the wine grape vineyards of the state are owned today by the California Wine Association. In other words, the future production as well as the manufacture and sale of wine will be in the hands of the combination."

"And who will work those vineyards?" asked Duncan, quickly. "Mr. Stoll, in the Fruit Growers' Convention last spring made the statement that the problem of labor on our vineyards would be solved by the influx of foreign laborers, presumably low grade, cheap labor, into the state with the opening of the Panama Canal. The prohibition people have taken up that statement and are making capital of it in this campaign and with effect. I don't wonder. You and I and some of the other independent growers have stood out against this cheap labor, and contrary to our own interests, have insisted upon employing American labor when the prices paid us for our vineyard product made the cheapest labor obtainable a living necessity. On the vineyards owned by the California Wine Association foreign help is employed almost exclusively. That's the result of your combinations—the way co-operative capital is helping the plain American—the little man!" Mr. Cummings spread his hands with a jesture and smiled into Duncan's eager face.

"Exactly so, my boy, and your opportunity. Go to it. Put all your idealism, your reform ideas into this work to which you are called. Into the establishment of an honest and paternal

combination such as the best minds of the country have dreamed and such as is possible. Don't tear down and destroy the sources of benefit and power like some in their ignorance would do. Build! Use your personality, you've got plenty of it. Make other men over into your way of thinking—don't let the greedy man wield all the power! Change the things that are wrong and establish right policies. Its a big work, and a possible one, if you embrace your opportunities—Blythe's partnership—the legislature. Go to it with all your young strength, and God bless you!"

Following the interview, the two men sought the veranda where the ladies were established enjoying the moonlight and the evening breeze.

"Hear you, Ladies, this boy has some bully news!" cried Mr. Cummings. "Duncan, you tell them, I won't steal your pleasure." He threw himself negligently into a porch rocker and Corinne made room for Duncan beside her. in the broad veranda swing.

"Well, its not exactly authentic news, yet. At least the project is still a tentative one," he apologized.

"Never mind, no mincing now, go ahead," prompted Cummings. "No, I'll tell them myself, you're far too modest," and he related Blythe's proposition, omitting the business details in which a woman might be expected to lack interest. "What do you know about that?" he ended, triumphantly. The two women were beaming on Duncan with flattering pleasure and approval.

"Duncan!" cried Corinne. "Do you mean it? Why, I can't believe its true. *You* of all men, for Blythe to pick out!"

"Why not Duncan?" threw in her father quickly. He was annoyed at his daughter's unusual lack of tact. His loyalities were all for the boy. "Duncan never posed as one of your 'rising young men' with the smart assumptions that

hide essential defects. But men know men and choose them for their qualities not for their taste in cocktails and dress-suits."

"Why, I didn't mean that, father!" exclaimed Corinne, haughtily, irritated both by her own inadvertant words and her father's rebuke. "I meant that Duncan was—I meant—well, just that you've been saying," she capitulated with a laugh—"that Duncan is so different, so much finer than the others," she continued speaking as though he were not present but with a half shy glance at him.

"You wouldn't expect a man like Blythe to recognize his fine points. Blythe is all right," she hastened to add, "but he's rather—Oh well, rather!" she gave a delicate shrug of her shoulders that expressed her meaning admirably. "But of course," she added, "business is another thing, quite, from society and I suppose a man of business, as father says, is trained in looking for men even when they're not quite fitted by nature and breeding to discover the finer qualities."

Her words held a candid compliment and the quick smile with which she turned to Duncan, a smile in which admiration was subtly compounded with an inference of something new in Duncan that commanded her woman's adulation, comprised a flattery that made his senses whirl.

"And you will take up with the offer, of course, Duncan? You spoke as though there was some doubt," she concluded. Duncan explained his cause of hesitation, which he admitted had been largely eliminated by Mr. Cummings unqualified encouragement of the project.

"Oh, you must not lose it," Corinne urged. Her voice was low and intense and she spoke with a little air of possession that gave him a thrill of happiness. "I want you to have it, its your chance. I shall be so proud of you, Duncan!"

Mr. Cummings retired within to finish his evening paper, and Mrs. Cummings excused herself shortly. They were alone

in the fragrant twilight. How beautiful the night, how sweet the air, how full of a deep, throbbing happiness seemed everything in the bright whiteness of the broad landscape upon which they looked from their cool shelter. The moon touched all things with the peculiar radiance of the California night, when the grass blade, the leaves of the trees, even the wings of a night owl that drifted hooting from a high tree, scintilated with brilliant light.

They talked quietly, of his plans, of the things that had happened while he was away, of many thing in desultory fashion, pausing often to listen to the night sounds, to enjoy the quiet of the still evening, to feel the communion that is stronger in silence than in words. He was poignantly conscious of her nearness, of the odor of the delicate perfume she wore, of her hair—a lock blowing suddenly across his forehead made him start—of the instant touch of her a moment when a large winged insect startled her. She seemed possessed of a delicate languor, that just fitted his own mood and they swung idly, the slighest effort providing dreamy movement.

Her face smiled up at him with a docility and yielding that he had never known in her before. There was almost appeal in it. He had never acknowledged to himself but it had always before been he who sued for favor; always he who was weighed, in her presence, and found wanting, kept subtly conscious of it by a certain haughtiness, the slighest touch of tolerance and impatience. He felt no criticism. He had deserved her past indifference, her disappointment and faint regard. He had been a slow, awkward fellow with no tallents or accomplishments of speech or manner such as possessed by the men who paid her court. But now things were different. He remembered with a thrill of pleasure Marlinee's candid words about his change. It was true. He felt himself a man. He was well poised, resourceful, and at this moment he realized a certain

sense of power over the woman he loved to impel, to subjugate and to win.

Yet he had no intention of pressing his advantage at this moment. It would have seemed an ill-bred thing, assuming an insulting worldliness on the part of Corinne, to have asked for her hand now, as though the first hint of material prosperity assured her acceptance of him. He sat in a trance of self-assurance and happiness, certain by Corinne's changed attitude, by his own new and surging impulses and the promised fulfilment of the material conditions the worldly world lays on a man, that his desire was at hand.

She stood on the veranda step to say good-night and as she passed down them the boughs of a swinging rose vine caught her hair. He turned back to disentangle it. The soft gold-red strands were in his fingers, his face was very near hers in the moonlight. She put her hands on his shoulder, laughingly, as he worked, and her breath was on his face. He loosed the last rich curl and with it something else. He seized her hands.

"Kiss me!" he said, holding her in a grip that hurt. "Kiss me!" She looked at him wonderingly. He took her in his arms, crushing her to him in a kind of fierce madness. "Kiss me!" he commanded. "You can't put your hands on me like that and not kiss me!" His breath came short, he felt a strange brutality. She laughed softly, suddenly relaxing in his arms and he kissed her fiercely. Then he let her go.

"Good-night!" he said, and turned away.

Going home he was amazed, astonished at himself but not regretful. A strange exultation, a sense of vindication claiming him. It lasted till he fell asleep that night but in the morning, in the light of day, dismay and horror took hold upon him. What had he meant? What was it loosed within him that moment? What unspeakable thing had he done to lay such violent hands on this refined and beautiful girl, the woman he

loved? He was faint with the odiousness, the beastliness of it. He could not have been himself. Something—a little too much drink during the day; he had met a succession of friends and business men in town with whom it had seemed necessary to be sociable, he and Mr. Cummings had ended their talk with wine and on the veranda Mrs. Cummings had urged a glass from a rare bottle of old Burgandy, from a friend, newly arrived from abroad; he could not refuse. It was that, a little unavoidable excess. Surely it was that. He hoped no such beastliness lived by nature in him.

To wait till evening to make his apology was insupportable but business called him in town and kept him there till night. He wrote a brief note and sent it to Corinne. It took him fifteen minutes to find the words and then they did not satisfy him. What could express his self-disgust, what words could right him again in the eyes of Corinne.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Corinne sought her boudoir that night, her face scarlet, her eyes shining and exultant. Yet she felt a bit shaken. She had discovered in Duncan a lover. Not that that was an unusual discovery. Corinne was one of those women who demand of all men that they be lovers, if only for the hour. But Duncan had been different from other men. Never before had Duncan by his own volition practised the demonstrations of a lover. And *such* a lover!

She dropped into a low chair before her dainty dressing table and looked at herself in the glass. Her hair was disheveled, her gown crumpled with his embrace and she was taken with an emotion unusual for her well-poised head and heart. Her hand smarted yet with his grip. She looked at it, curiously, where the red circled the delicate flesh and a great exultation laid hold of her.

From under the vanity, the conventionality of the girl, the instincts of the primal woman emerged and rejoiced. She had met a master! For the first time in her life she felt her self dominated, her will surrendered to another. Such tribute had never been taken by the immaculately groomed, smart mannered lovers she had known before, the men who could mingle cocktails and repartee with such grace. They lacked the primitive force of a man like Duncan, self-contained, contemptous alike of super-culture and grossness. In the moment in which she had known his embrace she had felt the pure essence of the man that his self-command, his simplicity, the naturalness of his physical and mental life had allowed to survive and have strong and normal way. She was not fitted to appreciate his more subtle qualities, the qualities of mind and soul that provided his uncommon personality, the man in his entirety, but she

realized a new and exhilarating experience in her physical nearness to him, a zestfulness she had never known in her former conquests.

But *was* it a conquest, yet? Why did Duncan not push his advantage? She had never yielded to any man such surrender. Her face flamed, not in compunction but in the thought of her complete domination, her entire capitulation, an advantage she was not wont to yield.

Her mind took hold of uneasiness. Could it be? Duncan was changed. She felt it on the first night and that change had given him new consideration in her eyes. He was older, more experienced, with more power and independence. His former diffidence that had annoyed her with its semblance of humility was gone. He had become a man worthy of her interest and something more. His comparative indifference, too, had piqued her vanity. His new self-possession and individuality had lent zest to their evenings but he seemed more remote than in the old days, less susceptible to her charms. She had not recognized the command with which he made his impulses bide their time till his pride and circumstances would allow him to make honorable suit to the woman of his heart.

She remembered that there had been times when he had disappointed her, when he had failed to appear at the informal hours she was accustomed to look for him. Had he other interests? Once in her coupe, she had met him driving his machine with Marlinee beside him. She had always been jealous of Marlinee. Corinne knew of his deep regard for her. And on another occasion she had caught a glimpse of him walking slowly, confidentially, with another woman, a girl unknown to her. Were there others beside herself? Was Duncan indeed a man of the world with his various loves and would he count last night only another score to his credit? Duncan, the shy, the deprecated, the patronized and coached?

Her face flamed with the thought and she started at the sound of the delicate lace of her tiny handkerchief, torn by her nervous fingers.

It could not be. It was absurd. Duncan was not that sort of a man. Her only rival lay in Marlinee. Marlinee loved him, of course she must, a girl of her ideals. Did *she* love him? The thought flashed curiously into her mind. Well she desired him. He was a man to be desired, now, and she must have him. There were few things Corinne had ever been denied.

In the morning she received his note. She crumpled it in her hand and laughed with scorn at him—humiliation for herself. And this was the end of his brain storm—the meaning of it all! A mere moment of unrestrained passion which he had not even the nerve to sustain with bravado, to push to his advantage if he really desired her, as he had led her all these years to believe. Faugh! Corinne was not a pleasant person to live with that day.

In the evening he sought her. She was alone on the veranda again. She did not come to meet him, but her voice directed him. She was sitting in the veranda swing. He plunged into the shadows impulsively and found her, cool, remote, langorous, in her retreat.

"Corinne," he cried at once, "what an unspeakable brute I was! Oh, I have hated myself all day." He flung himself on a low stool at her feet, his face aflame, braving her. She drew back looking at him in the dim light, strangely. He deserved it, he knew but he winced.

"Corinne, I know I was a beast! I dishonored you, I dishonored myself. Can you forgive me?" She arose slowly and stood looking past him. In the darkness she bit her lips. He dared not look at her and the moment seemed an age.

"You are apologizing for last night?" she said. He groaned; she was relentless. But she suddenly gave a laugh, an amused

laugh like a mother at the ignorance of a child and came close to him, placing her hand on his shoulder.

"You don't seem to understand. You gave me the idea that you were making love to me." He stared, unbelieving.

"Then you are not offended?" he gasped. "I thought you would be insulted."

"Insulted, because I thought you loved me?" Her eyes were close to his, looking down at him as he stared up in stupefaction.

"What do you mean?" His breath was that of a hard runner. He seized the hand on his shoulder. "What do you mean?"

"Why!" she laughed and shrugged her shoulders, "that we are lovers, aren't we? We've been so for years, people say. And its time we were acting like lovers isn't it? She bent and deliberately drew her red lips across his cheek. He sprang to his feet.

"You mean it, Corinne!" He seized her, pushing her face back until he looked into her eyes. They mocked, but smiled and he closed them with his kisses.

CHAPTER XIX

The first impulse of Duncan's new happiness was to tell Marlinee. Marlinee had so long been the sharer of all his joys and sorrows. But Corinne had abstracted the promise to keep the matter a secret for some weeks from all but the two families, and he was willing. That she had capitulated before the proofs of his material prosperity had materialized filled him with gratification. It proved that her affection was based on something more than wordly outlook. He reproached himself that he had assigned wordliness any place at all in his conception of her personality. She was a lovely and unselfish woman, as lovely as her comely exterior, as pure in motive as the exquisite texture of her flawless beauty. He could wait. In honor, he was bound to wait. When the partnership with Blythe was formed and his material and social position established, then the engagement would be formally announced. He could tell Marlinee one of his new joys, however, and, enthusiastic from the encouragement received from Mr. Cummings, and the pleasure and congratulations of the two ladies, Duncan sought Marlinee and buoyantly detailed the news of his offer from Blythe.

"Blythe!" exclaimed Marlinee, the quick emotion that conveyed so unerringly her thought mounted to her cheeks in color.

"Oh, you don't mean Blythe!" Duncan mistook the cause of her consternation.

"Sure, Blythe! I knew you'd be surprised—glad for me. It's great, isn't it? I never could have thought of such a thing. Why, Marlinee, do you know what this means? It is the making of me from every point of view. It's the fulfilment of all that I could ever wish, all that I have wanted, dreamed of."

He spoke with feeling. Corinne's face, her smile, the promise of her eyes were before him.

"But, Duncan," Marlinee was embarrassed. "Duncan, Blythe is the owner of the Parisian. It is his latest and pet enterprise. He is owner, or has controlling interest in the "Non Pariel,' and in the 'Little Hungarian,' two more smart and notorious cafes. I was at the Non Pariel last New Years. The manager called up and asked to have me sent out. It was the opening night and 'society' had engaged a lot of the tables. The management wanted a big write up. Hayward went with me. Society was there and everybody else. I never was in such a place before. We left at midnight and at that hour men were snatching the girls from their chairs and ragging, some of the women were on the tables and some of the men under them. It was awful!

"I told McWhirter about it; in fact he looked in on it himself, and he was awfully mad. We didn't give it a line in 'society.' McWhirter said he wouldn't if they cut out every line of advertising for the next year. Hayward gave it two sticks and a single head as a news story." Duncan listened in amazement, but his face suddenly cleared.

"That's pretty bad," he said, "but I'll bet I know the reason for it. It was opening night and New Years Eve, two things that provide for license. The manager wanted to make good, to popularize the place, and he let the crowd have its way. About the Parisian and Glad's case, I told Blythe the other day, didn't name her, of course, and he seemed surprised and concerned, said he didn't stand for that sort of thing and would look into the matter and have it stopped. He said he expected the place to cater to the best and he wouldn't have such things going on.

"But about the 'Non Pariel'," Duncan continued, "don't you exaggerate a little? Mrs. Cummings and Corinne said

they attended the opening night and it was delightful. Very smart but thoroughly respectable in every way. Perhaps they left before you did."

"Perhaps they did," said Marlinee, with some sarcasm. Their commendation did not improve the matter in the least in her eyes. She remembered them as members of a gay party at one of the society tables. Mr. Cummings was not present. Mrs. Cummings and her daughter were among those apparently well-bred people who follow 'society' to whatever extent its whims and foibles lead, assured that anything must be eminently respectable to which members known as the "smart set" lent themselves. She did not know when Mrs. Cummings and her daughter left but she did recall Corinne in the filmy habiliments of conventional evening dress moving with her partner in the hideous contortions of the "rag", elbow to elbow with couples whose manner and exterior showed them to be denizens and patrons of the underworld.

"But, Marlinee," added Duncan, uncomfortable by her disfavor. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll look into this thing, of course. I'm sure I don't want to tie myself up with any business I'd be ashamed of. But even if this criticism of his refreshment places is true, even if these abuses have worked themselves in, you must remember that they are not ineradicable. I'm to be a partner in the business and on equal footing with Blythe himself. I'll have my say in this matter. This is but a small part of a great and respectable business Blythe is operating. Here is where I can do something in the way of changing the conditions you and I deplore. If I go in with Blythe there's one thing certain, this thing will be stopped. I'll give my hand to cleaning up the refreshment places that I have anything to do with and making them the places they should be, where men and women, and boys and

girls can come together and enjoy each others company in wholesome environment."

His face was flushed with his new enthusiasm and he looked very big and efficient, his strong young shoulders under his thin shirt bristling to the task. She put her hand out to him involuntarily with a quick smile, but turned away, as quickly, and shook her head.

"Won't that be great, Marlinee?" he urged like an eager boy.

"Yes, dear—very fine!" she said.

Duncan's days were filled with an exhilaration not before experienced. His life, so long constrained, repressed by circumstances, seemed suddenly to have emerged into a large place, a big view, with many delightful and undreamed of things on its horizon.

His manner of life was greatly changed by the first two considerations. As Corinne's accepted, if not yet acknowledged fiance, he went out much into the gay society to which she belonged and his new popularity and his own determination to mingle more with men, to be one with his fellows, took him among the latter; to the clubs where he was extended a cordial fellowship, to the social occasions of his business friends.

His long repressed social instincts began to emerge under these influences. He developed undreamed of social possibilities. He could talk well when he chose to talk. Men listened to him, women too. His reticence piqued their interest and vanity. It was something to draw out this reserved, self-contained man who, when he spoke, was found to be possessed of real conversational talents. He surprised them sometimes with sudden retorts that checkmated their sallies. They liked his blunt, mannish ways better than the more polished manners of the parlor-used men.

The evenings with the older men, in occasions strictly masculine, he enjoyed best. He had always been a great favorite

with his father's friends. But even the doings of Corinne's set he attended with immense diversion. Their frivolities amused him. He was not backward at cards and a Scotchman who had lived in a family which kept up old traditions could not but dance with distinction, even though soberly and with vast conscientiousness. Thus did Duncan accomplish the tango and other modern terpsichorean tests under the tutelage of Corinne, who was immensely proud of his social progress. He entered into these diversions with the delight and amusement of a boy; he was regaining his lost play period. In other words he was revelling in wholly new experiences, physical and psychological. It was "dessert" time after a long season of extremely plain fare; a delightful and unbelievable change from his years of practised self-denial.

Oh, but he had "dug" at college these past four years! Oh, but he had skimped himself! He had cut out every personal pleasure, stripped his expenditures down to the bare necessities of living, abandoned even his pipe. He couldn't afford anything. The place needed every cent and he had his mother always in his thought and her pathetic economies. He had never indulged himself in the idea that certain expenditures belong to masculine right, no matter what may be the sacrifices of other members of the family. And now it was over, or nearly over, and things undreamed of were at hand.

Corinne, of course, was his chief joy, the goal for which he had worked and prayed—as much as he ever allowed himself to pray for anything. It was a part of his stern,unworded creed. Praying ordinarily wasted time for accomplishing with his own God-given brain and arm.

He saw Corinne daily, as was the privilege of an engaged man. When he did not see her, he thought of her, of her hair, of her eyes, her lips, her throat, of the lace, rising and falling on her soft bosom. It was a strange thing that all his thought of

her was associated with the physical. It troubled him. He had never been a man who laid the supreme value on the physical. He had never been guilty of the vulgar appraisment of women practised by some men. His imagination was peculiarly clean.

It was a matter of concern to him, this development of a bent of mind of which he had been unconscious. It was not Corinne's fault, he told himself. It was the evidence of some weakness in himself, of which he had been unaware. In his self-disgust he called himself hard names. After all, all men were alike. An element of baseness lived in all. Only women were pure. It was a strange arraignment of the Creator that man with his primal infirmities, the survivals of the brute within him, should be privileged the association of women, good women, lovely women like Corinne. But he wished that Corinne might understand a trifle, the weakness of men, of himself. He wished she would use a bit more discretion in dress. She did not dream the overwhelming splendor of her physical charms, accentuated by the filmy and clinging gowns the season's modes permitted.

There was, in fact, the slightest lack in his ardor; a disappointment which he himself would not acknowledge. The physical glamor of Corinne was ever with him, present or absent, but he missed a subtle something, a spiritual, a soul quality, that had always been associated in his mind with the thought of love. His reserved, reflective mind had exalted an ideal of womanhood that would combine with physical charm, all the highest and finest things of a woman's nature—things that would form fellowship with the best in himself; no, more, that would inspire that best to a higher goal. Sometimes, in her presence, with her whole splendid self, his to reach out his arm and take, he was conscious of the man in him looking beyond, unsatisfied by the emotional fulfilment of love, wistful and

expectant yet. Always it upbraided him, this other man. It walked with him home in the late shadows of the night. It whispered to him that he was not yielding to this woman he had desired all his life, his all, his complete self, the gift she, as his affianced wife, deserved. He wished he could ask someone about it wiser than himself. Marlinee? She knew so many things, funny little girl. Then he laughed at the absurdity of the idea.

A phase of Duncan's new life, otherwise so grateful to his new senses was the necessity it laid on him for more indulgence in drink than he desired. His tastes were in all ways most temperate and his aloofness from his fellows and from society in the past spared him the convivial habits with which more sociable men were drawn. Now that he was adopting the conventionalities, this was included among the rest. It was provided both by the hospitality he met at the homes of his friends, and by his business associates. But he used the utmost caution in his drinking habits. He was willing, since the experience at Corinne's when the wine went to his head so unexpectedly and with such unaccountable effect, to admit that there was danger in it. He should, he told himself, forgive the wine for its work on that occasion since, indirectly, it won him Corinne, but he did not care to encourage tendencies of which, before, he did not know himself possessed. He could understand now how wine used in excess came to exaggerate the natural passion and tend to vice, besides other results. It was no thing for weaklings—the drink. It behooved the strong to use it with caution.

CHAPTER XX

The trial of Antonio, at first promising to be no more than the usual commitment of a *cholo*, developed into one of the most desperate legal battles that the state ever had seen, certainly the most bitterly fought issue that ever had been based upon the liquor traffic.

Duncan himself was a witness for the defense. His testimony was used to establish the character of the defendent as one industrious, temperate and faithful. It was all Duncan could do for Antonio and a service insignificant enough when his whole mind's energy and desire were bent on saving the man in whose impending fate he felt an oppressive if undefinable responsibility. The days held more acute anxiety than he had ever known before. Never before had he been associated with circumstances that involved the life or death of a man. His residence elsewhere since his majority had relieved him of civic duties and he had never had the leisure to haunt the courts as a diversion. He had never attended a murder trial before and like many, unaccustomed to such scenes, the matter of fact air of the proceedings, the absence of impressiveness, of the sense of fateful things, amazed and shocked him. The lawyers smoked and chatted inconsequentially during recesses and the judge leaned over the rail between witnesses and passed a pleasantry with the court reporter. The testimony of one of the Hindoos provoked laughter throughout the court-rooms in which His Honor joined.

Yet Antonio sat there, on trial for his life, and his dark eyed little wife at home, in the anguish of suspense, was attended faithfully and tearfully by Jeanie.

"*Virgen Sanctisima*!—*Ten mis misericordia*!" the little thing prayed, hour upon hour, her hands stretched toward

the cheap little altar where the candles had been kept burning since the day of Antonio's arrest, and Jeanie, sitting tense and watchful, added "Amen!"

Duncan sat and moved in a trance and some of his cherished ideals grew remote and vanished wholly in the shock of reality. "Justice," that incomparable goddess, in his new conception came to wear the guise of the type-writer girl who haughtily guarded the Judge's office, her sword a bristling desk ruler, her crown and insignia a high-pitched coiffure well spiked with horse-shoe hairpins.

Cliffe threw into his defense all the power and logic of which he was possessed and which knew no flagging. To Duncan, listening with an intensity that made his whole body an organ of hearing, it was an arraignment of causes that swept the color from his face with it's fierce, personal application.

"And Gentlemen of the Jury," continued Attorney Cliffe after summing up the testimony of the defense in the masterly manner that marked him as one of the ablest lawyers of the state, "In passing judgment on this man I want you to remember that the prisoner, Antonio Gomez, is not a '*cholo.*'

"Antonio Gomez is not a *cholo.* He is an American citizen, a native son, the son and grandson of a native son. He was born and raised on the land of the man in whose employ he is. When Douglas Cameron bought that land from the heirs of Manuel Garcia, the Gomez family were tenants and employees on the land, and there was an agreement between Cameron and them that they should remain as such so long as the arrangement was agreeable to both. And it has been agreeable to both families for many years. From the testimony of Duncan Cameron, the present owner of the estate, you have heard today, that these men were in all ways faithful, industrious and reliable, and this Antonio in particular.

"Consider now, that, with the record of this faithful service

to their credit and with their affections bound up with La Mesa vineyard, from long time association as their birth place and home, these men—the Gomez men, all but Antonio—were discharged wantonly and without provocation, not by Cameron, who was away at the time, but by his manager, Morton, in spite of Morton's knowledge of his employer's regard for the men.

"And why were they discharged? In order to replace them with cheap labor — imported labor, Hindoos. This also, as you have heard from Duncan Cameron, strictly against his policy and intentions.

"I have contended in this trial that revenge was not the motive of this murder and I still so contend—but I would not have you lose sight, Gentlemen of the Jury, of the grievances, the defendant suffered in that discrimination against himself and his people and I want to say now that this case affords a striking example of that increasing practice in this state of discarding American for foreign labor; importing the trash and truck of the eastern world to underbid our clean and honest American laborers in the clean and wholesome work of the fields and the vineyards. I tell you, gentlemen, that this sort of thing is a thing which is going to bring about a civil conflict in this country when our peaceful vineyard lands will be stained, not with the deep and wholesome juice of the vine but a deeper dye—the blood of our outraged industrial brothers. Into this man, then, this man of industries and sober practice, of law abiding instincts, this wrong bit deep, and the resentment of it rankllled.

"And, now, mark you, Gentlemen, something entered into this man here, at the logical moment, that inhibited his law-abiding sense, his ideas of right; that broke up his self control and loosed all the pent up passion and resentment within him. What was that thing? *Booze*! And where

did he get it? From the man that worked him the first injustice—him and his family—from Morton!

"Gentlemen, I have no desire to paliate the habit of drink—to excuse the man who is such a fool as to let his appetite get away from him. Every man ought to stand on his volition. But I will say this, and I want to say it so strongly that you men won't forget or overlook it, that is, that the man who *does* tempt another man to drink, or to any other indulgence in weakness, is responsible for the results of that indulgence, and just so far as he over-ruled the other man's judgment, wilfully and with intent, the former is in part exonerated from the guilt of results.

"Morton encouraged his men in the booze habit. He made drink available for them, against the practice and policy of his employer. By a little straining of the regulation, by what is practically known, in the eyes of the law, as boot-legging, he got the booze for his men, urged them to it as looking to their interests.

"You have heard the testimony of his employer, Cameron, and the reluctant testimony of the manager himself to the sobriety of this man before he was pressed, for policy's sake and the sake of his position, into drinking. You have heard his own testimony as to his reluctance to resume an old habit now conquered. You have heard his story of how that habit, grew on him by the opportunity provided.

"You have heard his story of the evening drinking bout. Of the wine provided by Morton, and his continued urging of the men to have another round.

"You have heard him tell of how, from determination to drink but enough for policy's sake, he was urged to drink more and more and then how the madness took hold on him; the inhibition was accomplished and he drank—drank like a swine, with swine.

"You have heard him tell of a dim remembrance of starting home with the rest, of words between him and the Hindoo, of the two grappling and then—confusion and darkness!

"Gentlemen, what was that moment of darkness, when the sense and the senses of the men were alike struck out? I'll tell you. It was the moment in which the poison he had drunk was fused with his long hurt, the resentment, till then kept in bounds by the man's royal will, safe-walled in the deep vault of the subconscious. It was when the poison reached that dangerous mine and drink and hate, in combustion, wrought it's normal result—*tragedy*!

"Will you condemn this man, the victim of madness—of *imposed* madness? Will you hold him responsible for this crime?

"I tell you, Gentlemen of the Jury, that this prisoner—this man who has no memory of his deed—is not the one who is responsible for this tragedy. There are others. Morton? Yes, and *you* and *I*, the citizens of this state whose vote legalizes this thing—*drink*—the logical end of which is crime. It is we who stand before the bar of justice—in the court of the Almighty, charged with the murder of a fellow man!"

***

The prisoner escaped the hangman's noose by a hand-breadth but by the verdict of the jury read in the drawling tones of the court clerk, Antonio, twenty-five years of age, a husband and father, a laborer of the best type—*sans* booze—was doomed to take his youth, the strength of his young manhood that promised a wholesome seed and strong generation and the working capacity of some forty or so years within the shadow and eclipse of the penitentiary, not to come forth from thence until his discarded clay should be borne out in one of the plain boxes the state supplies for the ashes of such sacrifice.

***

Duncan had awaited the verdict with a face whiter than that of the prisoner, and when it was announced Antonio's little wife, who had insisted on being with her husband at the crucial moment, crumpled like paper and fell across the arm of her chair. It seemed incredible! Duncan in his inexperience had been more sanguine than his attorney. Anxious, distressed as he had been for the outcome, his mind could not grasp for Antonio the fate of the death penalty and even a life sentence was not to be entertained. Ten—twenty years—he had tried to bring Amanda's shrinking mind to accept as a possible outcome, but *this*—this life in death—this burying of the quick in a living grave. It was horrible, inconceivable.

But there was chance for a re-trial. He whispered the hope in Antonio's deaf ear. The latter had not spoken or made a sign other than to reach and support his wife till the court attendants came and bore her to the ante-room. But a new trial was denied. The evidence had been so convincing that the court could not do other than deny the motion, and Antonio left on the following day, in the company of a deputy sheriff and two other prisoners for his destination, San Quentin.

Duncan never dreamed of so tragic a parting. His own practiced self control broke down before the grief of Antonio's distracted wife and children—the latter, charming little creatures in which their Mexican blood was scarcely discernible except by an unwonted beauty. The little things, unrealizing the meaning of the moment but sensing the tragedy with the keen instinct of children, clung frantically to their father, and the oldest little fellow turned with scarlet face and flashing eyes on the officer:

"You shan't take my papa, *mi querida papa*! What will mama do—*pobre mama*? And my little sister—*hermanissima*? You are a bad man. Let him go! let him go, I say!"

Antonio took the child between his knees and buried his

face in his curls, and voiceless sobs shook his great shoulders. Then he embraced his wife and their baby and pushed them blindly to the door; turning, he held out his arms for the handcuffs.

At the station, Duncan talked to him of release—of pardon. He should have it—he should go free if Duncan had to sell La Mesa Vineyard for it. He should be brought back again if it took Duncan's all.

Antonio listened silently, almost indifferently, though he thanked Duncan in stereotyped terms for his help. He said but one word as the train pulled out and he reached his hampered hand to Duncan for the last time.

"There's only one thing I want," he hissed with sudden flame, "only one thing. To see Morton and Bernardini burn in hell fire for this! To see the man that dared to give my son the first glass of liquor burn in hell fire through eternity!"

At the moment Amanda was helped half-fainting to the automobile by Duncan who had undertaken her care, Bernardini in the snug office of his winery was dictating a letter to his wife, summering at Lake Tahoe tavern. Bernardini had never conquered the English alphabet sufficiently to write with comfort or with assurance of his letters being read, therefore, he utilized the services of his highly paid stenographer for his most intimate correspondence.

"Dear Margueretta:" he dictated, between puffs at a fragrant cigar. "This getting on without you and the cubs isn't to my mind—it ain't Christian for a man to be parted from his wife either by the outing season or any other cause and I don't propose to stand it. It's me for the woods about Friday next. And inasmuch as business has been looking up lately, I'll come overland in that new Pope-Hartford I promised you last spring."

By an odd circumstance the price of Bernardini's Pope-Hartford just equalled the amount of Attorney Cliffe's fee in the services of Antonio.

CHAPTER XXI

Duncan's dismissal of Morton had been an incident he would like to forget. Morton, irritable and overwrought from a recent prolonged spree, smarting under the hot words of Duncan against his conduct of affairs and especially his part in the recent tragedy, stung with the humiliation of the dismissal, answered defiantly.

"You fire me, do you? Make a big noise about my drinkin' as if the thing never happened on La Mesa vineyard before. Why! Your own father was a booze fighter—" He got no farther. Duncan's fist went out like a flash and sent him sprawling to the ground. He stood over him, his face livid, the veins standing out on his forehead:

"You coward! You say a thing like that about my father? Get up and go or I'll do you damage."

Morton gained his feet, quivering and cowed under the shock of Duncan's blow. It was an evidence of his degenerated moral fiber that he would take such punishment from any man without return. "All right!" he sneered, as he moved off, "Just remember—*you*, who set yourself up for something fine, beyond the weakness of other men! Ask the neighbors, ask the Doctor if what I said wasn't true. *They'll* tell you! And the thing'll get *you* yet!" Duncan took a menacing stride toward him but Morton had put the hedge between them. He moved off brushing the dust from his clothes and muttering.

Duncan turned to the house, sick over the whole affair. Morton's implication he had heard before, once or twice on the lips of low-bred people, and his fist had clenched as now; then he had laughed. It was absurd to allow the babble of vulgar and ignorant folks to stir one. This was like the silly

report that Mrs. McDonald at her last garden party was found incapacitated in her boudoir before her guests left, that the wine men at their banquet, two thirds of them, were "stewed" before the evening was half over, gossip, disgusting gossip on the lips of people of pin-head caliber, folks who knew but one side of the social drinking habit, the low, the vicious!

But in spite of himself Morton's accusations had startled him, enraged him to the point of doing what he had done. Well, the man deserved it. It might knock some sense again into his booze-addled head. He was not sorry except on Elsie's account. Elsie was almost a sister. She had come from Scotland shortly after the Cameron's had, from Jeanie's home village, and had made her home in the family until she married Morton.

He should have spared Morton for Elsie's sake! He shouldn't have added to Elsie's other troubles, estrangement between the families. He would see Elsie and explain. Elsie would understand his indignation. Elsie knew, of course, as did he, that his father had,in his latter and invalid years,drunk more than formerly, more perhaps, than was quite good for him, but his nervous weakness demanded it; his emotional excess in a way counteracted the effect and it did not hurt him as it might have others. He was always strong; always absolute master of himself; no member of the family could say with truth that he ever had been seen drunk. It was unpardonable that Morton, because his own weakness had made a guzzling fool of him, should be permitted to accuse his father in this manner—slander a dead man.

Morton returned home in a devil's mood from his encounter with Duncan. He spread his arms in the open door-way, revealing his crumpled and dusty clothes and the bloody welt rising on his cheek from Duncan's blow.

"See—a gentleman's work!" he cried, "Your fine and lovely Duncan wasn't satisfied to fire me but had to knock me down first." Elsie rose and came quickly to him.

"What do you mean? What did you say that made him do it?"

"Say? Why the truth! Gave it to him straight. Told him it was fine and consistent for him to turn off a man because he drank once and awhile when his own father was a boozer."

"Harry!" Her voice held more concern than on his first announcement. "You didn't tell Duncan *that*—and he worshipped his father! He never knew—well, it's a wonder he didn't kill you!"

Morton raged. Then that was all she cared, that Duncan's fine sensibilities might not be hurt by the facts, rather than that her husband had had the treatment of a dog! Well, that was all right. But a man that had so little devotion in his own family, it was no wonder that he sought other company, other comfort!

In his soreness over the matter Duncan took his trouble to Marlinee. He had been to Elsie with an apology and explanation. While she had listened to him without reproach, it was plain and natural that she should feel some sympathy in Morton's cause—some resentment. He had expressed his sincere regret at the necessity of dismissing Morton whose incapacity, he added, must certainly be plain even to her. He wanted them, however, to continue to use the foreman's house until Morton could find other work and to call on him in case of any need whatever. But here Elsie's loyalty found tongue:

"Find work? Yes—and where will he find it, now you've fired him? Who'll have him now and him gone with the booze?

"Ah, I ain't saying that Harry's done right—I ain't saying

he had any right to say what he did to you but I will say this, that Harry used to be a temperate man. He was raised that way, his folks believe that way, and it was at *your* house that he took his first drink—at your table! And I think, considering that, that you're almighty hard on him now." Duncan's hand had gone up to his face as though the blow he had given had been returned. His face was very white, but he strove for control.

"And how did he get the habit of drinking—regular?" she flashed. "In your service, doing your work with your friends—being a good fellow in your interests, setting up the treats! Oh, they were very temperate, like you! They were used to it. They could take a lot and never show it. But Harry, because he wasn't built that way, because it took hold of him, brought him down, you haven't any use for him any more. You throw him out, brand him in the eyes of the community as a drunkard. He can't get work now, he won't get work, and now what'll we do?" She gathered into her arms with one defiant sweep her sturdy little sons, who stared up at her with wide astonished eyes, then she fell suddenly to sobbing on their heads.

Duncan went away sick of heart. There seemed to be nothing to do but tell Marlinee. Marlinee seemed the natural repository for all his troubles. He would tell her in spite of the mental reservations with which he knew she would hear his story and that would not be complimentary to himself. Marlinee would come out and see Elsie—the two women knew and liked each other. Marlinee would make Elsie see reason—she must not, in her indignation, pack up and leave, with the family's little means, go away from her friends whom she needed just now so sorely. Marlinee would help.

CHAPTER XXII

Marlinee spught the Mortons the following Sunday. Harry was away. She was relieved to find Elsie in a more softened mood over the matter.

"I don't spose I ought to have talked that way to Duncan, especially after what Harry said. That was awful!"

"What did Harry say?" demanded Marlinee. Duncan had not told her, had merely said Morton had called his father a name he couldn't bear and he had knocked him down. Elsie recited the incident.

"Oh!" said Marlinee, "That was terrible of Morton. "Then it's true, is it, what has been said? I never knew. I never wanted to ask."

"Its true all right, I was with them to the last, Harry and I, and we pledged our word to Mrs. Cameron that we'd never tell anyone—that we'd never let Duncan know. Oh, it was terrible of Morton to break that promise."

"And in such a brutal way," added Marlinee. She understood now, in full, Duncan's mood. "But, Elsie, he ought to know, he *ought* to. It might make a great difference with his views. It might help him to give up a habit that may threaten himself in the future—since his father, a man of such will, succumbed. Oh! Elsie—he should know!"

"Yes—that's what I told his mother but she would have nothing of it. She'll scarce let herself admit it. And it was that that made me so mad, all of a sudden, when I thought of it, how, just cause its in *their* family, this disgrace, it must be guarded, shut up, kept from folks. But when my man falls the whole world must know it."

"For it's true—" she added. "When he come to work for Mr. Cameron—Harry—he was as straight and fine as any man

ever was and the best hand they ever had on the place—you remember. And he was such a bonnie lad, too, so bright and witty, with such taking ways. I fell in love with him at first sight and he with me." Her eyes were tender, she was far away in her thoughts, her fingers working unconsciously—stitching on a tiny baby dress. She was walking again down the path between the vineyard rows in the scented twilight, a handsome, virile man at her side, his arm about her, the moonlight on her face as she looked trustfully up into his. "He was so bonnie," she murmured, in her revery, "and kind!" She awoke with a shiver.

"It's so different now! Oh, it's so different. He ain't any more the same man! It's awful what liquor can do to change one. First he was just restless—nervous—couldn't keep any interest in his work and was sort of irritable when I tried to coax him to things—to an appetite for his food and interest in the children. I didn t know, I thought it was the work; he'd been working so hard—the end of the wine season, and Duncan gone. It *was* the work, too, I suppose, that made him crave it. Folks say the appetite takes hold more when you're tired—run down. He told me what was the matter, at last. He said he'd been drinking too much. Seemed as if he had to; everybody invited him to wherever he went and he's had to go a lot. He's tried to do well by Duncan," her eyes filled, "he's done his best, more than Duncan realizes. Not just work, but doing, keeping his head up and taking the place men, business men, seemed to give him as Duncan's manager. He's been popular too," there was pride in her voice. "He's been asked out a lot and I have too, some, but I don't take to social things like Harry and then, too, this that's coming. I couldn't.

"So it all helped toward the drink, and he's been getting worse and worse. Oh, I can't tell you—it's terrible!

"You know there's different stages in the drink. There's when a man has had just enough to make him feel good—to make him over jolly, kind and generous. I didn't understand at first, and I used to think those times were when Harry was all right, was getting the better of himself. He's come home some nights to supper and he couldn't be kind enough to me and the children, kiss me and play with the babies, like he used to, and we'd all be so happy together. But I came to learn that was just the first stage and to dread it. It meant the beginning of a drunk, that went from that to quarrelsomeness when nobody could please him and I locked the children up so's—" Marlinee's face was full of horror and Elsie caught herself. "So's they wouldn't irritate him. And after that he was just gone—dead to the world." Elsie used the prevailing slang unconsciously and without humor. "No use to himself or anybody else for days. And when he ain't drinking, or drunk nowadays he's just a wreck of his former self. All ambition gone—all his interest in us—gone all—his"—Elsie began crying suddenly, her face in the baby dress. "Seems as if all his love was gone, too," she sobbed, her shoulders shaking in great gusts of grief, long repressed.

Marlinee was silent, she found no words for such a tragedy. The tears filled her eyes and dropped down her cheeks. She reached Elsie with the comfort of warm encircling arms but her heart was sick. She felt words removed from this woman's loss, the daily misery of such a bereavement.

"I can't tell you all," Elsie was speaking again—striving for control till her story was told. "I can't tell you—there are some things that a young woman like you can't know, and whisky changes a man most in those ways. This one is the only baby that I never wanted. It's a frightful thing to be a mother when your whole soul cries out against it! When you feel it's a crime to bring life into the world! Suppose

it should be a drunkard! Suppose it would be crippled, or blind, or something," she spoke in a whisper—"Oh Marlinee—I've heard awful stories of children conceived in liquor!"

"You musn't talk about it! You musn't think about it," cried Marlinee with an echo of Elsie's horror in her voice. "You must think and pray that it'll be all right."

"And you must stay here, Elsie," she added, hastening to change the subject for Elsie's face was white. "You must stay here and not break with Duncan and his mother. Now is the time you need them if you ever did. You must stay, for the sake of the children, and try and not blame them.

"I know just how you feel—oh I know!"—she added violently. "It seems impossible that they can't see—that *he* can't see—one so quick to see and understand—so quick to feel for others—so kind!" her lips quivered, she was speaking to herself. Elsie eyed her curiously, and a woman's quick intuition came to her.

"Marlinee, dear," she said tenderly, and Marlinee started. "Marlinee—I pray God you may never meet a fate like mine. Never, oh, never think for a moment of marrying a man that drinks—a man that drinks, even just a little." She spoke eagerly, intensely, forgetting her own troubles for the moment in the solicitude she felt for her friend. "No matter how temperate he is—how self-controlled; especially if it's in the family—Marlinee—don't do it, you never can tell—look at *me*!" Marlinee smiled faintly—

"Thank you, dear, she said, "don't worry about me—I—I never shall."

Marlinee left Elsie more burdened than she had been for many months. It had not been a happy way of spending her week-end holiday, not a helpful preparation for the week before her, its work carried not too easily by her these days. She thought wonderingly of the strangeness of things. For weeks

she had borne the burden of tragedies induced by the evil she hated with all her heart and intelligence. And in every case the incidents involved Duncan. They were his troubles that he brought to her for her help and counsel. Strange—strange that he should turn to her! Strange that he should brave her reproach.

Did he not care for that reproach any more? Was it nothing to him, wholly absorbed in Corinne and in her approval, alone? Or was he still sure, established in his own mind of his position, of his innocence from responsibility. Was he really, intellectually unable as she had averred to Elsie in her defense of him, to see and understand that, as a member of the industry, one of the growers and makers of strong drink, he had no responsibility for those who used it to their hurt? It was a conclusion she was reluctant to admit, such a reflection did it assume upon his mental capacity, on the ordinary power of putting two and two together and getting four. But it was, of the several conclusions, the kindest.

She had seen Morton before she left and the impressions received gave her more concern than ever for Elsie's future. He had, as Elsie said, changed, changed unbelievably and terribly. A year ago, a splendid specimen of a man in every respect , the product of clean habits and good blood and out of door living. Now he was loose-limbed, shambling, with distorted face, and eyes that looked askance and sullen. He gave her a reluctant hand, soft to flabbiness, revolting in its tale of degeneracy and self-indulgence. She could have cried out with the shame of it—the wickedness of it all!

She realized more and more as she sat in Morton's shabby home where Elsie's care had failed to cover to the eye, the growing poverty, the awful grip of the habit, how it loosens the fibers of control and volition, turning the man, in the affirmations of his degenerated will and the impulses of his

poisoned body over to the ravages of an appetite that leaves him not till the breath is out of his body.

She looked on the thing with a fainting wonder. But, she remembered Duncan's argument, the argument of all the users or makers of liquor. "Our business is not designed for the purpose of making drunkards. These are the weak, that fall by the wayside as do some in the pursuit of all the good things of life."

"Not *designed* to make drunkards?" she thought. *Drunkards* are *the necessary accompaniments of that business.* How does a man make money in the grocery business? By selling his goods, by making patronage for himself. Who are his best patrons? Those that buy the most goods. Very well then—does the man that drinks temperately buy the most liquor or the man that drinks to excess?" She laughed in the scorn of her reasoning. "And if," her mind told her "if by the buying of much goods, the drunkard is cut off and his patronage thereby cut off, such loss does not alter the argument so long as there are patrons to fill his place, other patrons, other users in excess to hand across the counter daily their toll, their contribution to the daily proceeds of the saloon man's business, price of their manhood, their efficiency, their happiness and that of those dependent on them, that the liquor man's institution may flourish."

Her throat was hot with the hurt of it, with the resentment of it, with the bitter knowledge that many who were wise and kindly and of large heart, like Duncan, refused to see, shut their eyes determinedly to the light, that admitted, would blight with its awful revelation, but, blighting, bring freedom from bondage to a responsibility that one day they would faint before.

CHAPTER XXIII

Marlinee, capable of fine flights of spirit, of sustained heroism of mind, was, like all temperamental people, apt to suffer a severe slump after such an indulgence. Her sympathies were ingrowing and presently reached a level of hurt that showed an outward irritation and loss of poise.

"By George! You've got a bad temper today," exclaimed Barton, next morning, as Marlinee set the telephone down with unnecessary emphasis after an ineffectual attempt to locate a week-end party. "Wouldn't like to have you land on me like that!" Marlinee made a grimace, shoved her sleeves up an inch higher and dove into the exchanges.

"Marlinee's mad and I am glad," sang Hayward, whittling down a pencil over the waste basket. "Marlinee turned me down yesterday for one of her little charity joints out to the country. Better have gone with me, my lady! You wouldn't have come home with a grouch from a trip to the river in my stimulating company."

"Say, Marlinee," drawled Winston from his corner, "When will you begin stumping the country for state-wide prohibition? You and old Fessendon would make a cracker-jack team and, I might add, in the terms of the classic, in-vin-ci-*ble*!"

Marlinee flashed upon him with unexpected spirit. She was accustomed to the boy's raillery and ordinarily gave and took with equal heart, but Winston had touched a thorn today.

"I'd start out this minute, if I could, if I thought it would do any good. Oh, you laugh, you boys, at this thing, with you its a case of the frog: its fun for you, but its death to a lot of people. And I've been where its death—the booze—

one family, or what is just as bad, the loss of everything that makes a home, love, faithfulness, a man once one of the finest ever, changed to a—besotted brute."

"Say," asked Hayward, with concern, "Is it so bad out there—" he finished with an inference. Marlinee had told him the occasion of her visit to the country.

"Its just that bad, and more than that," answered the girl. "It's Harry Morton I'm talking of"—Marlinee pursued, turning to the rest of the boys—"I don't care to gossip, but I know you're all interested in him." It occurred to her that here she might make a point for a cause that the boys treated with rolicking lightness, whether in deprecation or in mere fun of rousing her defense, she could never quite be sure.

Morton in his new role of good fellow was known to the boys and was formerly a not infrequent visitor to the office. He had risen with rather conspicuous rapidity from the place of a day laborer to that of a man of affairs—the affairs of his employer to be sure, but nevertheless, administered until the past year with a credit and efficiency that gained him respect and a degree of recognition among the larger business men with whom he had to deal. Morton belonged to a class of men the rapid life of the times and particularly the west provides for, by dropping out one generation in the normal course of development.

From an obscure employee on Cameron's place Morton had become practically a town man, a guest of the city's representative bodies on banquet occasions, solicited as a member of the city's clubs, taking his wine at his favorite cafe instead of Arbuckle's coffee in his shirt sleeves at his own table. It was a transformation dangerous in its rapidity and new experiences. The risk was doubled by the means of the inseparable accompaniment in modern life of the social drinking custom. Since his rapid decline he was dubbed "false alarm." In other words,

the world, the small world represented by Riverdale's business and social circles was credited with having been "stung" in regard to its latest protege: a man who promised well but had not enough running in him to last two years. It was bad. Compassion seemed to be on the side of society with little but a contemptuous pity cast Morton's way. Marlinee resented the verdict with all her outraged sense of justice. Now she related with eloquence lent by her deep feeling, the circumstances of the little family, Elsie's grief and the startling change in Morton. The boys listened with interest and concern.

"Well, I call that a pretty bad case," said Winston, "but my sympathies don't go far with the man," Winston was new in the town. "A fellow that hasn't enough sense to stop drinking when he's had enough isn't worth much sympathy and a man that's so far gone that he can steal from his wife and babies to feed his stomach ought to get off the earth—the sooner, the quicker."

"Well, I don't know," answered Hayward, "I'm disappointed in Morton. Morton was a good sort, and he seemed like a mighty good fellow before the booze caught him. Its physical with him—with all of them, the regular boozers—they oughtn't to be blamed. There ought to be some regulation—some—" he was getting rather vague and Gordon laughed.

"Prohibition! Prohibition is what you mean. Say, Marlinee's made a convert. Listen to Hayward, Marlinee!" Hayward looked annoyed, not because of association with the reformer, but with the cause.

"Aw—rats!" he said. "I don't mean any such thing, but I'm not the kind of a fellow that jumps on a man when he's down and there's no telling either, by George, who'll be the next one down. It's physical I tell you—'chemical'—as London says—the craving for it. A lot of the best hearted fellows, the best sort in their families, come to it, to just the

sort of thing Morton's induced for his wife and kids. That's the darned trouble about it." The boys looked askanse and at each other with significance. His heavy lids and deeply encircled eyes suggested a growing experience in the things of which he spoke and a reason for his partisanship with Morton. They liked Hayward, but he, too, was a "good fellow" a "prince."

"Well, shake up and toss out, it's all a game of chance anyway," Norris contributed his youthful philosophy—the deductions of twenty-one. "By Heck, here's your champion, Marlinee! Here's Scott-Browne in the ring and rolling up his sleeves!" The men wheeled with cordial greeting and Marlinee rose from her chair. It was a strange impulse she had in Fessendon's presence.

"Copy—men, Copy," called the city editor, wheeling in his swivel chair at the end of the room. "Get busy you—I want some dope. Scott, you demoralize my office! I'll tend to you over here." He reached for a chair and waved Fessendon to it. His face reflected the same pleasure as the boys' and Marlinee's. Fessendon turned, greeted the boys and took Marlinee's hand with a swift and eager smile, then he moved to McWhirter's desk and dropped into the chair provided by him. He stretched his long legs lazily.

McWhirter jabbed a page of copy on the hook, shoved his desk clear, reached for a match from an unspeakably dirty and ancient box and lit a cigar. Then he whirled around on Fessendon.

"Now fire away!" he said. "McWhirter was never too busy to see Fessendon. The two had never been known to agree on a single point but they were the best of friends. It was a battle royal when they got together. The men within hearing of the argument found it difficult to hold their attention to their work when "Mc" and "Fess" were having a hot one.

Fessendon was the president of the local Dry Federation. His hyphenated surname, Scott-Browne, bestowed upon him by his ambitious parents, had stood, a dozen years back for club man and society man and an all 'round good fellow. But a light had fallen on Scott-Browne, a light the fierce flame of which welded the diversified personality of the man into one vigorous individuality bent on a single object—that of passing on the light to his fellows.

Fessendon was a Scotchman, a giant in size, with intellect to match. Gaunt, lean, muscular, with a peculiar subtle strength that never flagged and a mentality, keen and insatiable. His powers of mind and body slept within him like the strength of a hound. In his indolent, almost lazy manner, his easy gait, the seeming lassitude of his great limbs stretched at ease in grotesque pose, a whimsical smile on his lean face and eyes that seemed to dream, there was nothing to suggest the innate power of the man; the tremendous unflagging energy of which he was possessed, the stubborn resistance, the power of fight. One was unprepared for the effect when Fessendon drowsily and with seeming reluctance uncovered his batteries and took to the defense in argument.

McWhirter provided Fessendon's antithesis. Of dynamic type, rotund and irascible, with lightning-like perception and talents of retort, but a somewhat impeded speech. His was an uneasy mind, sensitive, keen, with quick humor well tipped with irony—the mental constitution of the critic and the pessimist.

"What do you want, Scott? For a man who pretends to work you're the laziest looking scout I know of." Fessendon grinned appreciatively and stretched one long leg. "Dope," he said, briefly.

"Dope?" growled McWhirter, "thought we'd been giving you dope—a lot of it."

"More," said Fessendon—he had hooked a morning exchange with his long arm and was scanning with the utmost diversion the "Van Loon" family.

"Come out of it!" cried McWhirter, "What 'ch think—we're running?—prohibition supply house? Headquarters of the Band of Hope?"

"No," drawled Scott-Browne, withdrawing his attention with evident reluctance from the Van Loons, "You're running a bum, one-horse sheet that doesn't know live news matter when it sees it or it would have had a man to cover the debate at the Park last night when our man from 'Frisco made your man from San Jose eat dirt to the tune of 2,000 people cheering to beat the band. Rehashing the Sun story this morning—mistakes and all, I reckon?" McWhirter reddened. He hadn't looked for Fessendon to land from this direction and it was true, he had forgotten to give out the Park assignment. He capitulated gracefully.

"By Gad, Fessendon, That was an oversight—sure it was, and I'm sorry for it. That was something worth while, too, one of the genuine real live shows you've pulled off this campaign. Most of 'em have been the 'Father, Oh, Father, Come Home to Me Now,' tear-duct-flooding racket that wasn't worth the space we gave 'em. Say I'm sorry—sure!"

Fessendon ignored both apology and criticism and continued unemotionally.

"I want some dope, some more dope—a lot of it. This proposition is worth your space. People want it—they're reading it. The Searchlight (the Journal's contemporary) is putting it all over you in this matter. They're giving us a column daily. The Sun takes all we want to give 'em—I've just arranged for that. Now what'll you do?" McWhirter threw his cigar away and lighted another.

"Well—you have the nerve!" he enunciated between puffs,

with unusual deliberation. "You have the nerve to come here and ask for space and a reporter detailed on your fool Dry proposition when you know the sheet is a Wet paper, so wet you can wring it out. Ask me to edit a column, daily! Maybe you want two columns, played up with a feature head and some of our latest fancy type." Fessendon grinned. He was certain of McWhirter after his Searchlight coup. Wet or no Wet he would never let the new sheet put it over him in the nature of a new feature. But McWhirter would have his say first.

"Say," continued McWhirter, warming up, "you don't seem to realize that your whole proposition makes me tired—awfully tired. You prohibitionists want to put the liquor industry of California out of business, want to put the winery business, the state's been to such pains and expense to build, out of business; want to put the wine-grape growers out of business and put some seventy million dollars worth of property out of vineyard use because a few people assigned by providence to be asses insist on making asses of themselves!"

"I'm glad, at least, that you keep to the facts better than your contemporary, the Sun," interupted Fessendon. "You notice in his editorial the other day he claims the destruction of 170,000 acres of fertile California land, if the Dry amendment carries. Reckon prohibition is going to make things so awful dry that there won't be irrigation water left—eh? That's the only thing I know of that will keep those acres from which the wine grapes are rooted from growing peaches at four to six cents a pound, table grapes at thirty dollars a ton, raisins at three and one-half cents, poultry and dairy herds. Maybe prohibition will dry up the cows though—" added Fessendon, thoughtfully. Whereat McWhirter threw up his head and snorted, but he returned to his bone.

"You reformers—you make me tired—in bulk and indivi-

dually. You're making the world over for the unfit. By all your societies' for the prevention of' and clubs for 'to provide for'—you're overdoing it, all this concern for the failures, the weaklings, the culls of life. Why, man, the world won't be fit for a normal individual to live in, pretty soon. You'll have us all on crutches—one big, jolly sanitarium where we'll live in the half light and eat pre-digested food only! All levelled to one satisfactory plane of insanity—that's *altruism* for you, the altruism that's rampant today!

"And your prohibition idea is just one of those fool movements; one of the dreams of the altruist-crazed. It designs to remove just one more opportunity of choice, of self-control, a chance where a fellow can show the kind of stuff he is—whether a guzzling stomach-guided animal or a man.

"No—I'm talking *right*!" continued McWhirter. "We're uplift-mad already. We make a fad of our reforms; the white slave traffic and criminality—juvenile delinquency—are the subjects of every pulpit and lecture platform in the land. Why you'd think there wasn't a normal child born nowadays and that those fortunate enough to have been born normal haven't a show in the world of growing up right. It's having its effect, that talk. Thousands of young, well-intentioned wives are scared out of the idea of having a family by the improbability of bringing a sound and sane child into the world and keeping him so. Sure, that's right! A little newly-wed was talking to my wife the other day about it—almost in tears she was; said she wanted a baby, but she had the latest statistics to show that it was a *six to one* risk and she was scared out. Now what do you know about that!

"Our best women today are so engrossed in work for the Unfit that they've left off bringing forth the Fit. I can't help thinking of it when I see the splendid specimens of womanhood at the head of your huundred and one institutions 'for

the interests of'—single women that would make glorious wives and mothers, fitted by the very things that make them useful in their work—devotion, self-sacrifice, the maternal instinct—for woman's normal life. Damn it! It makes me hot through and through. You're making spinsters and nuns of the best womanhood in the land. They're wasting their lives in a misguided sense of duty on the wrecks of the world—the junk stuff—thousands of them that ought to be serving the world by putting clean normal blood into it in the form of their own offspring.

"Duty!" McWhirter mopped his brow with his pocket handkerchief and continued. "Duty! An exagerated sense of duty—abnormal ideals—are making old maids of our girls and of our boys, spindle-shanked young prigs who talk at prayer meetings and give the impression that they have a corner on the Lord. '*Don't*' is your watch-word. '*Don't* dare a little innocent deviltry, you'll set a bad example! *Don't* entertain a big strong passion—it may run away with you! '*Do t* drink a glass of beer,' you'll die a drunkard and send others to a drunkard's grave. *Don't* do anything natural, or spontaneous, or what you want to do—self denial, repression, inhibition, is the word. Bring up the boys hand raised, spoon-fed. And then you expect a race of men from their loins." Shortage of breath was the only consideration apparently, that stopped McWhirter.

Fessendon had listened to the editor's words with more than ordinary interest. It was a subject that appealed to him and for once the two men's ideas coincided. Fessendon acknowledged in the teachings of the churches, at least in the past, ideals that tended to the repression of youthful impulses, to an unnecessary withdrawal from normal activities and pleasures, but this flaw, he felt, was being largely eradicated. He in no way confused these mistakes of over zeal on the part of religious

instructors with the movements designed to restrain the vicious preying on those same youthful impulses, substituting for self-denial, excess; for exaggerated piety, dissipation. He roused himself from the negligent posture in which he had been listening to the editor, shook out his long legs with a characteristic movement, and started to answer McWhirter when the latter was interrupted. A couple of youths had entered the office. They were a well known type; two showily dressed young "mashers" with hats tilted to their eye-brows, trailing the odor of cigarettes and beer. One was already well loaded. As his companion talked, he groped for and found the wall, with evident relief, leaning heavily against it, while he eyed Marlinee, afar, with bleared and approving eyes, hopeful of attention.

"What do you want?" asked McWhirter impatiently.

"Does Banty Brewster work here?" the first youth asked.

"Banty Brewster, who is he? What does he do?" asked McWhirter, shortly. The boy burst into a coarse laugh, blowing the smoke ostentatiously from his tilted lips.

" 'He,' that's good. 'He!' Why Banty ain't a 'he', she's a 'she', a goil, a 'Chicken'—see? Folds papers in here, or some joint."

"Well, she's not here; or none of your kind," said McWhirter, contemptuously and turned his back on him. The youth cast a resentful look at his squared shoulders and slouched out, followed with some difficulty by his companion.

"Well, I'm not stuck, myself, on spindle-shanked young men who talk in prayer-meetings as though they had a corner on the Lord," commented Fessendon, gently, but I'd about as lief have them as those two chaps. *They're* certainly not leading the ascetic life. I'll warrant those two aren't afraid to drink beer because they'll set a bad example, or get into deviltry, or refuse a big passion. *They're* letting the natural animal have

its way but they're not very pretty, or useful, are they now? Nor will they breed a normal and admirable generation.

"Fact is, it's pretty hard to strike the happy medium or to know what that 'medium' is, even. A little too much one side of the beam and you run to asceticism, a little too much the other and you're back to the brute.

"But while you're talking of the inhibitions of altruism, the self-denials of the man with ideals and the reduction of virility and offspring among good people, I want to say that you're off in your comparisons. Take it all in all, who are the people that are marrying, staying married and keeping up the business of populating the world—the people of the churches or the people of the world? Why, there isn't any comparison. If you don't think so look at the young people of one of our churches, any of them, and the young society set, member of the 'Entre Nous' Club, say! *There* are some young men and women unhampered by the enthusiasms of the humanitarian, the impulsions of the philanthropist. What do you say about it?

"Don't make the mistake McWhirter, of charging up the spindle-shanked young men and the spinsters to religion or high ideals. I admit we have both, and I regret it, but devotion and religion doesn't make either."

"Well, it does, and a lot of the grossness in the world that you deplore and preach against is the result of our ultra-cultured, ultra-educated age," asserted McWhirter, testily.

"Maybe so and if so—if it's just a reaction from our moral exaggerations—then it isn't to be too much deplored. It'll serve to restore the equilibrium. But this is just where the work of alcohol—of the drink habit—comes in. It helps to *accentuate* the reaction; it impels people to the opposite extreme; induces grossness, self-indulgence and animalism.

"You credit religion and exalted ideals with robbing the world of home-makers," continued Scott-Browne, "you deplore

that the finest womanhood of the land is devoted to spinsterhood and philanthropy instead of the rearing of their own children.

"Why aren't they doing it? Because they aren't mated. Where are their mates? The unmarried men, the so-called bachelors, men of ability, of fascination and virility, that should co-operate in that noble enterprise?

"Spilling their seed in the houses of assignation, giving themselves to the Scarlet Woman, to death-heads, heedless that their natural mates, pure women, beautiful women, women of glorious possibilities—are going mateless and homeless and childless all the days of their woman's bloom.

"Where is the pride of our men in their seed? Where is their ambition, where even those nobler qualities of the brute man, the instinct for their home, mate, and offspring? *Lost*, lost I say, in pure brutishness; worse than brutishness, for the brute is normal, he recognizes law in his passion.

"Is this a reaction from asceticism, from over culture and the restraints of religion? I guess not. It is a thing provided for in large part by that which I would eliminate. What destroys a man's interest in the pure and lovely girl he thought to marry and causes him to forego marriage to seek the strange women? *Drink*, the polite habit of wine, if your please!

"What causes divorce, the disruption of families, children on the street? *Drink*! What makes boys impulsive before their time and degrades them to the uses of vice? *Wine drinking* among our young people in your inviting cafes and entertainment places.

"Yet you wouldn't put a stop to this thing, and you talk airily of the 'survival of the fittest.' Well, *give the Fit a chance to survive*, that's what I say! It isn't the 'fittest' that always survive, not by any means. Not against the odds that modern civilization, so-called, provides. The fittest survives when he's got the open to fight in and his two fists and his unhampered

brain, but how about the war? A handful of monarchs who, themselves survive only because illegitimate blood is infused into their line occasionally call a great war and the Fit go down in battle, by the thousands, by the millions; the Fit, I say. And who remain? The weaklings and the old men who couldn't go to war because of their infirmities. There's a case where the Unfit has induced the conditions that killed the Fit.

"How about the great fevers and plagues in the Canal Zone, in the Indian colonies? Did the Fit go down there? Sure they did. Men of strength and endurance, men who had lived through the viscissitudes of a hundred campaigns, men who had tramped thousands of miles through forest-thicket and over desert. A few fever germs too virulent for a strong man to resist carried them off by the hundreds and thousands. And now that we know they are able to do it—war and disease—we're looking after both. We've established a great sanitary system and outlawed disease germs wherever we find 'em and we've called a peace conference to eliminate war; we can't afford to lose the flower of manhood, the promise of our race, by either way.

"This isn't all the ways we're looking after the conservation of humanity; take our factory problems. There are thousands of men and women in them of good clean hearty blood, the Fit. But can they stand the strain their industrial life puts upon them, the deadly fumes of the factories, the *one-hundred and thirty degree heat* of some of the great furnaces before which men sweat, naked—the whirl of the wheel and flash of the needle close to the eye for harrowing hours? They sicken, they die, and we've found it out and said *this can't be*! A few men to build up a great wealth can't drive these men and women into early graves, men and women meant to survive, and bring forth the strong industrious race. We've got the eight hour law for

women. We've got provisions for decreasing the risk to life and limb and health. In all these things we've showed *sense.*

"But take the liquor traffic. Is it carrying off only the Unfit, the weaklings, the degenerates that we're better off without?

"Was Wakefield an Unfit, a weakling? Middleson, the best criminal attorney in this State or any other state on the coast, was Middleson a weakling, drift wood, junk stuff? Was Carter of the Consolidated one of the riff-raff, the world's wastes? Is Hayward, over there, the best man you've got, is he unfit to survive? I guess not. I guess they're all about as good as you and I and a lot of others that expect to and probably will live our days out. But the booze got them, or is getting them.

"And why? Because it's bigger than them. Because it's not a case of brain against a brain and arm against an arm. It's an infernal system maintained by your and my senile reasoning that's designed to destroy, and to destroy, who? *The Fit, the best in the land*!

"It's a thing a man can't get away from; it's a thing that follows him, that pulls at his coat and jogs his elbow and says, 'Take me with you, I'm the price of your success.' *No*? How does Hayward get his political scoops? By being a good fellow, sitting over at the St. George grill with Bartley and Havermeyer and the rest, cozy and sociable over their cocktails, getting on the 'inside'. How does Barton keep his popularity with the sports? By 'setting 'em up'. How does little Norris get a good story tipped off to him? By buying the beers. And Smith, traveling salesman, makes his top notch sales record this year by the same system and Hepston lands his political job the same way—the glad hand and the booze.

"Say! I wouldn't take Hayward's chance this summer for a thousand dollars, between the courts and the candidates. It's a losing game with him either way. Cut out the booze and he loses with his friends, keep it up and he's on the junk pile by

the first of the year. And as for little Norris, Man!" cried Fessendon, "it's a slaughter, a plain slaughter to put a lad with his talents and determination to make good on "police". Look at him now!" He seized McWhirter's arm impulsively. "What would you and I, childless men, not give to have a boy like that?" McWhirter, reluctantly turned and his eye softened at sight of young Norris, his fine head flung back, laughter in his eyes as he made a retort to one of the boy's sallies. "In God's name McWhirter, have a care for that boy!

"Now it's my business, and the business of this Dry state proposition," continued Fessendon, "to eliminate the fool system that permits a few men for their own benefit to induce such waste. Is there anything wild about that scheme, anything impractical, anything that shows the ranter and the crank?

"Heavens, man! Can't you see this thing, can't you see the absurd senility of reasoning that says we've got to keep up a business that accomplishes all this loss to human life; loss bigger than war works, than the disease we are studying to eliminate, accomplishes, than the industrial evils we've legislated against, creates? McWhirter, I've credited you in my mind always as being a man of exceptional insight but if you can't see the sense and the necessity, the dignity, too, of the work I'm in, then I give you up. You're not the man I thought you were." He dropped back into his chair again. It was seldom he spoke with such outward emotion. His was ordinarily the cool reasoning of the logician that pursues relentlessly and unmovedly his end, levelling his opponents' strongholds one after the other till he leaves a clean field behind him.

McWhirter was silent for a moment. He would not confess it but Fessendon had carried him irresistibly from his old moorings; had, indeed, uprooted those moorings to which his convictions and defenses were tied and swept them away altogether.

He found himself adrift, groping, half reaching out to embrace Scott-Browne's convictions so unimpeachably put.

"But you," he said. "You have survived, you've been all through this. You've been a newspaper man, a club man, a politician and a man of society. How did *you* do it?" Fessendon rose to go.

"By the grace of God," he said solemnly, "only by the grace of God."

McWhirter sat silent in his chair, absently flecking cigarette ashes. Then he rose and moved down the hall after Fessendon, as rapidly as his weighty bulk would allow.

"Fessendon, Fessendon!" he called jerkily, "you can bring on that dope."

CHAPTER XXIV

Shaken by the harrowing experiences of Antonio's trial and overcome by the result, Duncan was in no mood to resume his investigations of Blythe's business. But he had promised Marlinee to do so to the fullest extent. Blythe was waiting for his answer and he set to work at once.

From Cliffe's arraignment of the liquor traffic, sweeping in its accusation, his mind was as sore as from a physical punishment. It was a peculiar situation, to be flayed so unmercifully by one in his own employ, for he was standing the greater part of the cost of Antonio's trial. In any other cause he would not have stood for it but by the very circumstances he could say nothing, make no answer. Cliffe's concluding argument he had to admit was the most impressive one the attorney could rally for the cause of the prisoner, and was justifiable on that ground only. Duncan was not ready to admit that Cliffe was right in his dramatic charge against the liquor traffic and the voters for the liquor traffic of guilt for the Hindoo's death. In an indirect way, perhaps, yes, as the man who made his automobile or sold it to him, would be responsible for his death if the machine should some day turn turtle and catch him under it. But No! It was one of the sentimental and misguiding arguments wielded by the prohibitionists that pressed logic to overdrawn conclusion. He was responsible, however—every man was responsible—for his own personal conduct, that it set an example of temperance and sanity, and for his choices, that he, with scrupulous care, separate evil from good. It was this motive with which he took up the investigation of Blythe's cafes.

The result was a revelation, for Blythe's houses were strictly up to specifications—the specifications Marlinee had named.

That the scenes of the cafes, into the midnight life of which he had never before been introduced, amazed and repelled him, was a compliment to his sanity of mind, his instinct of self preservation. Duncan had never lent his passions to illegitimate use. Instead they had been splendidly conserved and enriched by sober living and constant and zestful purpose. He had a natural instinct for the clean, that caused him to discourage the suggestions that make for morbid imaginings; the stories told by some men over their cigars after the ladies have retired; the youthful escapades indulged in for the sake of instruction and entertainment. These things were wholly foreign to Duncan's cast of mind.

He went to the cafes alone. Undoubtedly he might have had little Norris' company or that of any other of the men he knew, but he did not care for comradeship on these occasions or the appearance of a lark, nor did he wish to impart to any the object of his errand. As a quiet observer in a dark corner of the room he could watch the scene undisturbed and was able to take in more of the garish spectacle, with a keener sense of its meaning, than if accompanied by a friend.

The place revealed the whole method and regimen of the underworld. Here after midnight hours was its stalking ground, here its recruiting place, at the tables running with the wine spilled by the revellers. Here the painted face of a denizen of the redlight was pushed close to that of callow youth, blushing under his baby skin, whose brave swagger and assumption of experience told it to be his first experimental foray into the whirl-pool of viciousness. He saw the ease with which she trailed him away presently, weaving and hiccoughing, eager in her wake.

He saw the scared faces of first night girls, mere children, "doing" the place under the tutelage of companions of experience, or some man of the world, some roue of a hundred such

damnable enterprises, who watched the fair, surprised blushes come and go from his covert shadow with covetousness and complacency.

He recognized with a start of amazement, men he knew, elbowing their way through the noisy shuffling crowd, pushing before them some highly colored creatures of the half world, women of whom he had heard, whom the world accounted unclean, their high pitched voices mingling in the revelry.

And everywhere was the wine. The wine—juice of the sweet wholesome fruit of his own vineyard, of the many vineyards lying out there under the clean white moon tonight! Everywhere the wine: dashed with skillful hand by the overworked men behind the screens, into the slender glasses; in the clinking trays swung perilously above the heads of the throng on the hands of the sweating waiters who ran and slid and dodged through the confused throng; in the glasses of the women held in unsteady hands, the rich dye trickling down the white bared arm and into the low bosoms; wine that inhibited all sense of right, that struck out all sense of shame and sent men and women circling in infamous embrace to the unceasing sound of the ragtime played by the sweating orchestra: wine into which some devilish hands slipped covertly the lulling potion and shortly bore a fainting girl unresisting through the crowd back into the dim passage beyond. *Wine*—everywhere the wine, prostituted to the purposes of the vilest!

Duncan's precautions, the absence of even a man companion with him laid him open to annoyances he had not anticipated. It was obvious, since he was alone, that he was waiting a partner. Among the gaudy sirens whose overtures he eluded was the girl whom he had met at Glad's gate. On the circumstance she presumed acquaintance and, to Duncan's increased annoyance he found her at each resort he visited. He was handicapped with a desirability of not wishing to appear the novice

and mere on-looker that he was and the circumstances necessitated a seeming acquiescence to her overtures. He ordered her wine.

"If he ain't the cheap skate!" the girl cried, "Won't be sociable to the extent of a measly cocktail!"

He forced himself to keep up his end of the repellant conversation till she tired of so slow a companion and flung herself away after livlier company. In their last interview she had jollied him vulgarly about Glad, and asked him significantly of her whereabouts. He would stand for no compromising of the girl. He answered her curtly and turned away. Her high mocking laughter followed him, a repulsive memory.

Then the thing was true! Blythe's latest enterprise by which he encouraged the wholesome practice of wine consumption was in houses that unquestionably entertained the underworld and if his own observations had needed confirmation they received it by a conversation overheard in the Journal office on an afternoon when business had called him there. The boys were enjoying relaxation while the big press turned off the evening issue. "The Non Pareil and the Parisian—those are Blythe's new cafes?" asked Westsmith, a new man.

"*Two* of Blythe's places," emphasized Hayward. "He's got a string of 'em up and down the state—his latest inspiration. Little old "Paree" in small; cabaret caricatures and baby-doll divertisement. They're some cafes, believe me!

"Funny about Blythe," continued Hayward, 'he has an income of, I suppose, a hundred thousand a year from his wholesale houses and as much in dividends on his manufacturing and Association shares, but he's a Yankee you know, and he can't let a chance to turn in a dollar get by. I suppose his money is in about one-third of the retail business of the coast, in the saloons up and down this

valley and Southern California and at 'Frisco, and he's always thinking up new investments, like his string of fancy cafes. Blythe is everywhere, even over on the desert where I was last year a few months with the construction camp of the S. and S. development company (Hayward's digression from the profession of journalism had been occasioned by a need of getting away from the booze, himself). Camped there just across the San Berdo county line, (you know the San Berdo desert is dry, officially so,) was one of Blythe's places run by one Mister O'Hooligan and a genius in his line. Payday saw Mister O'Hooligan expand to bu'sting with affability and cash and by the time the paymaster had thrown his gripsack on the midnight overland, the whole gang was on the bum and the enterprise of the S. and S. languished apace.

"Blythe's hand has been behind most all the schemes to buck the Wylie Option law in this county and when a poor little weazlefaced blind-pigger yclept Parchesi Spagetti gets pinched, the wires between the city hall and one William C. Blythe and Company's office begin to sizzle; the bail is forthcoming and it's ten to one that the county keeps the money and Spagetti is shortly holding another job in a spot remote and pacific.

"Blythe got it handed to him straight, if the people only knew it, in the case the other day of the killing of the Hindoo by Gomez out on La Mesa Vineyard. Cliffe took occasion for a digression in his argument for the defense in which he tore into the Bernardini Winery that Blythe has a big interest in, called the place down proper for doing a boot-legging business. Gomez got the booze from Morton, the foreman, and Morton from Bernardini. The district attoreney may take the matter up but Blythe 'll find some way to get his man off all right."

Duncan left the office. The last revelation had floored him. And this was Blythe, sleek, affable, smiling, decrying alike the debauchery of innocent girls and the catastrophic greed. A partnership with Blythe? The man had lied to him, and worse than lied. He had deceived him, as, no doubt he was deceiving hundreds of other men, his friends, like Mr. Cummings.

It was no hardship for Duncan to go to Blythe now and tell him the whole thing was off. It was the only thing to be done, under the circumstances, yet a great disappointment claimed him. What luck, what a fate, that so dazzling a prospect should have been opened to him, encouraged all his hopes and expectations, and then be dashed away.

And what of Corinne? Oh! But Corinne had not awaited to know the outcome of his prospects before yielding him her generous love. He was rich, rich, and there were other ways. He still had other prospects, the Grape Protective Association office, the legislature. If Blythe, shrewd man, had thought his ability worth such an offer as he had made, surely there would be others to recognize it. His happiness would be delayed. The vineyard was in a bad way financially and in other respects and it would take some shrewd shift to swing things in the next year or two, but with the goal before him, Corinne and her unselfish love, he could afford to work and wait.

CHAPTER XXV

Duncan sought Blythe in his office. He did not anticipate the interview as an easy one, but he intended to cut it as short as possible. He did not intend, either, to deliver himself of any comments on Blythe's business policy. Blythe was an old man and Duncan had no mind for accusations, even in his indignation for the Bernardini end of Blythe's responsibility. But his own sense of disgust at having been made a "goat," to some extent, gave brevity and crispness to his remarks.

"Good afternoon, Duncan, my boy, come in!" Mr. Blythe's tones were ingratiating. "Sit down, won't you? Take that chair there in front of the fan. Damn hot day, I call it!" He mopped the sweat from his own brow vigorously. Duncan took the nearest chair, with formality.

"Don't like the breeze, eh? Well, it does give some folks the snuffles I believe. Rather have that though, than *this*. Put your hat over on that stand there and make yourself comfortable. Wait, I've got a decanter in my closet here, just had a jug of 1882 brought in from the Riverbend winery. Let me give you some."

"No, thank you, Mr. Blythe," said Duncan briefly, 'I've come to talk business, to give you my decision about that offer."

"Well, say, that's good." Blythe seated himself again and wheeled about toward the boy with interest, his hands clasped across his generous pouch, his thumbs whirling, expectancy showing in his face. Duncan's heart nearly failed him. He could have cursed cricumstances that discovered this man in inevitable colors. Still he had never quite liked Blythe, a sudden thinning of his lips, a

hardening of the eyes, that turned them, on occasion, from genial blue to the gray of cold steel made him a man to fear. The change flashed across his face now as Duncan briefly delivered his ultimatum.

"Well, what's the matter, the offer not to your taste, not generous enough, not enough prospects of dividends?" He smiled but his voice was disagreeable.

"No, it's not that, not that at all, Mr. Blythe. Nobody in his right senses could ask for a bigger thing. I've told you that before and I want you to know that I have enough sense to realize it. There's just one reason why I can't take it, just one thing and I'm going to tell you straight."

"All right," interjected Blythe. He had squared himself in his chair as though anticipating the boy.

"I don't like the character of your business, some of it, a *lot* of it. I've been looking into it."

"Well yes, I supposed you had," interrupted Blythe, "I reckoned I'd given you about a week of my own time that's somewhat valuable," he spoke with sarcasm, "to investigating that same business and as far as I could see you were pleased enough with it, mightily pleased, I might say."

"I was," said Duncan, "*with what you showed me.* Its the part you *didn't* show me, or tell me of, that I'm not pleased with." Blythe made an ugly grimace.

"Mr. Blythe, I don't like your cafe business, a business that deliberately caters to and feeds the red-light. I don't like the class of saloons you provide money for. I don't like the part you had indirectly, it may be, in the recent troubles I've had on my vineyard with my men. Most of all I don't like the way you've deceived me, jollying me along, sympathizing with my views in the matter, indignant

for what I've met and my men have met at the hands of Bernardini. I didn't know you owned a dollar of stock in the Bernardini winery. Now I've learned that you practically own the business, and rumor, at least, has it that you knew what was going on between Bernardini and Morton."

Duncan stopped. Blythe sat silent a moment. He had sunk into his chair till one shoulder met his ear. His legs were stretched out negligently in front of him. One hand flecked the ashes from his cigar, the other toyed with a desk rule. His eyes half closed following the movements of his fingers. His attitude was one of insolence that assumed defense.

"That's all you don't like about my busines, young man? All the criticism you have to make?" Duncan colored. Knowing absolutely that he was in the right, the man, his words and his expression, put him in bad.

"That's all, at least that's the reason I can't take up with this offer. I thank you for it, sincerely. I appreciate it. I'm more sorry than I can say to have taken your valuable time to no purpose to yourself. Good afternoon."

"Say you, come back here!" Blythe's words stopped him. He was on his feet, his insolence gone, a scrutinizing whimsical look on his face. "There's no use in being in such a hurry. If I *am* such a bad fellow I don't contaminate. Sit down here, I want to talk to you." Duncan sat down reluctantly.

"You've thrown down my offer, a Jim-dandy one, too, I'll repeat. And you've come here and intimated that I am engaged in a business that a man of ideals, we'll say, can't stand for. That may be so, but let's see about it. I don't pretend to be a highbrow myself, and never was, and I take life as I find it. This is the way I've found it, namely, that there isn't any business one can engage in and make

a living that hasn't its compromises. The worst element will be served, along with the best, by some one, some where, some how, and the least one can do is to make the best of it. If business throws a man with that sort of people, and in the way of serving that sort of people, why, he has to call it luck and pocket the money without looking, if it hurts his feelings to scrutinize it.

"Now of course you thought I was a man who held different ideas and did a different business. Yes, I kind of made you think so. I'll tell you how it was. I was perfectly sincere in my offer. I needed you in my business and too, I had a sneaking desire, even such low cusses as we kind of men are," he added sarcastically, "have such impulses sometimes, I had the impulse to help you out a bit. I saw where your father—with all honor to his memory—had failed, by this very lack of business common sense, of 'taking the world as you find it policy' of which I speak, and I thought this a place for both of us to be served.

"But almost straight off you began to evince highbrow and kid glove tendencies; I saw I was up against it. Well, I never have been known to drop a hard proposition till I was dead sure it was beyond me to swing it. Here, said I, is a young man straight from college, a member of the Y. M. C. A., the Society for the Uplift, etc.; a young man with a Purpose, capital p, and the ambition to swing the world one notch nearer the millennium. Now he's bound to come to earth with a big jolt sometime, and then he'll look for a bread and butter job and say like the rest of us generally have to, 'to hell with the uplift'.

"I conceived it my pleasure to ease that jolt a bit and help make as easy a landing as possible so I thought to nurse him

along easy, to remove his delusions by slow and painless process and at last, when the time came, let him see the seamy side of the business as well as the society side, as it were. If he had the grit to stay with it after that he was worth his salt; I'd be glad I did it.

"But," continued Blythe, "he's torn away the veil and has looked the whole bally enterprise in the teeth. Well, I want to say now I'm not ashamed of anything. Why, do you suppose men don't know about my business? Do you suppose my associates, the other liquor men, aren't engaged in exactly the same kind of business, only less successfully? I might inquire where you got your information concerning my affairs. Probably from some one of my contemporaries who knew he could put it over you and is laughing in his sleeve while he goes about similar business."

"You're wrong!" retorted Duncan, "I asked no one. I investigated, myself, as I had a right to do and took no one's word for it, except public word—and that can pretty well be depended on. If I hadn't been away for years I probably would have known about these things, if, as you say, such things are common. But I am mightily deceived if they are. I have labored under the impression that the majority of men in our class run a straightforward business that sells good goods to reputable patrons and discourages excess and the associations your cafes provide."

"My dear boy!" Blythe had risen and laid his hand on Duncan's shoulder, with the old assumption of friendliness. "*A mistake*! I'm sorry to shatter your ideals, to remove your delusions, but it can't be helped. *The liquor business couldn't exist today without excess, the heavy drinker or damn it, the baudy houses and their patronage.*

"But that's no argument for doing away with it, for good men and women who drink moderately being deprived

of that privilege; for men who make their business by making liquor or raising the grapes that make the wine, going out of business. It's no reason either why they shouldn't cater to that particular kind of trade. Its all right to talk regulation, restriction, etc., all right, when you're doing politics. But there's just one solution to the hard facts of life, to the evil and suffering that exist." Duncan looked up surprised at Blythe in the role of the philosopher. "That solution is that good men live by it, by the *intended* evil of the world.

"Men will war and you and I, or some other fellow, lives off the money from their arms and their supplies. Men and women will get sick and they'll die and the doctors and the undertakers earn their bread thereby. Men and women will drink and carouse, they will buy the booze to do it with and you and I might as well be the recipients of the little good that comes out of it—the money from that booze. Now ain't that sense? Come, buck up! You're a young fellow and it comes hard at first but I'm giving it straight. I'm giving you, damn it, the biggest proposition a young fellow of brains and ambition and a girl waiting for him somewhere," he nudged Duncan facetiously, "ever had proposed to him. What do you say? Better reconsider it."

"Thank you, *no*!" said Duncan.

Blythe spread his hands; "Oh, well, that's all right. Sorry we couldn't put it through, but no harm done to anybody, I guess." Duncan rose to go, but he detained him.

"By the way, what do you have in mind about your place, if its any of my business. I suppose you will be able to arrange your finances without embarrassment." Duncan turned with chagrin. In his anxiety in one matter he had been guilty of an awkward omission. He was still under obligations to the man whose project he had rejected, and with criticism.

"I beg your pardon," he said quickly. "I should have

spoken of that, I meant to. Of course I shall relieve you of the renewal of that mortgage. You have been more than kind to carry it so long and I know it means no special advantage to you. I'll borrow money and pay you this week. I'm sure I can get the amount."

"Oh, that's all right, that's all right!" interposed Blythe. "I didn't mean my part of it. We'll let that stand just as it is. But the others; of course, now this is off I couldn't carry out that offer concerning the notes. By the way who did you say held them? I believe you told me once."

"Whitten, Jones and Powell. I think there'll be no trouble about getting them renewed, and as I said before I appreciate the kindness and extent of your proposition and I certainly appreciate your renewed generosity. I will accept it only because to do otherwise would cause me a good deal of inconvenience just now and I'll try and relieve you as soon as possible."

"Don't mention it, don't mention it," interposed Blythe. He had risen from his chair and was walking to the door with Duncan, his former engaging manner resumed.

"And you, what do you intend to do, with your time and the energies you refuse to lend me?" he smiled affably on the boy.

"I still hold the Grape Association's offer tentatively, you know, and some other propositions," he thought it would not be good taste to refer to the assembly candidacy.

"That's good, that's good! Then you're all right and well-heeled. Well, goodbye, come in again, any time you feel like it, and good luck to you!" He ushered Duncan out with an ostentation almost paternal.

CHAPTER XXVI

From the hospital Glad went to Marlinee's. The latter shared a modest appartment on a quiet street with a friend, another business woman. Both were away during the day, and Glad found the quiet and retirement of the cozy house most grateful. She still shrank painfully from going out or meeting her former friends and associates. In the new knowledge lent her by her unhappy experiences she realized the character of some of the young girls who had been her companions. What she in her innocence had entered into as girlish larks were to these poor young creatures loose episodes, first lessons in the education leading to deliberate and professional immorality.

Into the gulf of awful possibilities escaped, Glad looked with eyes that lent a terrible seeing. She had been on the verge; was indeed on the verge; and a horrible obsession, induced by the urgings of her loose girl friends, clung to her for weeks and unceasingly suggested this as her natural end. It was this horror which still dwelt in her frightened eyes; this suggestion that in the midst of the merriest of intercourse with her friends suddenly invoked a melancholy reverie to them unaccountable. It was this that made her physical and mental recovery so slow. She never left the house except of evenings when in the protection of the twilight, she walked out with Marlinee for the air. Norris, bold in his defiance of society and all Glad's foes would gladly have taken the girl abroad at his side in daylight, and urged evenings of diversion, the picture show or the recreation parks but the girl steadfastly refused his attentions.

The problem of Glad's life was indeed, at this period, a most puzzling one to the three who had assumed it. She was

as alone in the world as Marlinee, save for her brother. A tiny income from her father's estate lent barely enough to feed and clothe her. She seemed incapable of realizing or providing for her future. Marlinee had decided upon one thing, to keep the girl with her till her mental poise was fully recovered. Her affections had become much bound up in Glad. Their similar circumstances of loneliness appealed to her and her woman's instincts were involved in the care and solicitude for the charming child-woman. Barring the spectre of Glad's tragedy it was a happy household and when the two men joined them, as they frequently did, there was much innocent and wholesome merriment.

Marlinee was perfectly aware of Duncan's heart affair, but she appreciated with some humor that, at the height of his infatuation he found a surprising amount of pleasure and satisfaction in the little group of friends, organized on such an unusual and tragic basis. For as practical and one-ideaed an individual as he was Duncan was guilty of most diverting and wholly unconscious inconsistencies. The girl had always detected these. They were more marked than ever, and contributed strengthening versatility and attractiveness to his character. The little coterie of friends called themselves humorously, "The Family of the Five."

Glad was sitting one morning on the sheltered side piazza, some three weeks after making her home with Marlinee. She was alone, as usual at that hour. Unusually lighthearted today, she was humming some popular song as she plied her needle at a dainty bit of fancy work. She was a charming picture in her light morning frock, her soft hair tucked up under a morning cap, her sleeves back from her round arms. Her cheeks were pink with returning health, and the morning's exercises, provided by the light housekeeping in which she shared.

She heard steps on the walk. It was the grocer boy, no doubt, with the morning order. He would go around to the kitchen. She did not look up till someone stepped on the porch. Then she sprang to her feet, her eyes dilating with horror. It was a man, the man she had known. He laughed lightly and took off his hat.

"Well, hello! You seem frightened." She was backing slowly toward the door, her hand to her heart, her eyes held in a sort of trance.

"Sit down", he said, curtly. She moved on groping for the open door.

"Sit down!" he repeated, "Come back and sit down, I say."

His manner was impelling. Slowly, as if under a hypnotic spell she returned. He pushed the chair toward her and she sat down. He took one near.

"Now then, that's sensible" he said. "Well now, how about it? I guess now you're ready to go with me."

"To go with you!" She started from her seat but he laid hold of her wrist.

"Oh, just don't get excited, I don't want any fuss here. I expect you've got neighbors close by and it might be awkward for both of us. You're alone here, just now, I know that, and will be for some time, so we can have a quiet little chat here, in this cozy corner, like we used to before. Remember?" He brought his face close to hers, with a hateful grimace. She could have struck him and the fierce hate burned her throat but something kept her docile, dead.

"Say, you've improved—your looking fine, do you know it? You're plumper, got more color!" he was eyeing her, appraising her hideously. He drew a finger across her limp and relaxed arm. She wrenched herself away from him.

"Let me be, I hate you!" He laughed, softly.

"Well, that complimentary after the nice things you used

to say to me, but never mind. You're a pretty little devil. I like to see you mad." She was panting, straining from him.

"What do you want?" she cried. "Say what you want and go!"

"All right, it's just this." His intimacy, his banter, was dropped like a garment and more ominous attitude assumed. He jerked himself to a sitting posture with a covert look through the vines, then bent toward her, a hand pressed on her shrinking knee.

"Its just this," he said, "and you know it well enough. It's time you was coming across to the redlights. The girls told you that in the beginning. It's where you belong." A deathly shudder went through the girl and her head went back in faintness.

"Now don't act a fool, we havn't time. Of course I might take you right along with me now but there's some risk. What I want is for you to come along quiet, the way you ought to do. What do you want to stay here for on charity?"

"No, not that," she gasped.

"Oh, yes, it is. Suppose they enjoy taking care of you, those high-browed goody-goodies? Or maybe, say! What kind of a joint *is* this? I've seen men coming here, you little devil! If you've played me—" She had wrenched herself from him, striking out at him with all her puny strength.

"You brute!" she cried. "You say that of them, of my friends. Oh, I could kill you! They *are* my friends, the best ever made."

"Oh sit down, sit down! Don't lets have any dramatics here," he pulled her violently down into the chair again. "So you would hurt me, would you? Well, that's all right as long as it isn't the *other*. If it had been," his voice held a

threat that changed to complaceny as he noted her changed and cowed attitude.

"Well now, you know what you ought to do. You don't want to be a charge to these noble friends of yours. It ain't just nature for society people to look after a chit like you and they'll get tired of it after awhile. You've got nobody to go to, and there just ain't any way for it." The girl moaned faintly. To her crushed and horrified mind, already obsessed by the suggestion, the argument seemed logical, absolute.

"All right now, we understand each other, and there's to be no cold feet, remember. There don't need to be any explanation. I wouldn't suggest that you hold a farewell reception when you make known your intentions," his humor was horrible to the shuddering girl. "You're alone all day. Just pack up your things some day, we'll make it tomorrow, and hike. Call me up before you leave. Here," he gave her a card with a number on it, "and I'll tell you where to send your things and where I'll meet you. You can leave a little note saying you've decided not to be a burden any longer, etc. You can think up the frills, you're long on dramatic effect. But just don't mention your address, that's all!"

"Oh my God! My God!" the girl moaned.

"Now that's all, only", he bent over her his lips close to her ear, "hurry up, *get busy*! And in case you might be inclined to change your mind, I'll just suggest that I've the address of that fine high-brow brother of yours in my pocket, and I'll be glad to let him know what sort his little Sis has become nowdays."

She gave a start and her eyes flew open in fixed horror, then a great faintness swept her, her head went back, her arms fell feebly at her side. Her eyes closed. He stood over her a moment. His eyes were eager, like eyes of a beast with its prey beneath his claw. He stooped toward her.

"Why not now? Hell! Why didn't I have a cabby waiting? But I wasn't sure of the kid. He stops here mornings sometimes. Shame to miss a chance though." He gave a quick look around and strode toward the door. The telephone was just inside on the wall. Then he turned back.

"No, I ain't quite game," he whispered. "They'd have too dead sure a thing on me if they should catch me."

He gazed at the girl, reluctantly, as he tiptoed past her. She was quite still, lying in a dead faint, like death. He reached for his hat (what gentleman's instinct within his degraded breast had prompted his removal of it when he approached!) and slipped covertly down the steps. He walked away with the brisk air of a solicitor or the reader of gas meters. Marlinee, returning to the house for a forgotten and unmailed letter found the child not five minutes later.

Glad's first hysterical ejaculations in her rousing moments suggested the cause of her prostrated condition but her distraught mind as soon as full consciousness returned, resisted even in her physical weakness, the attempts of her friend to draw from her the story of the morning's episode. She was hypnotized with a frightful necessity to keep the matter a secret and to fulfill the horrible contract. But Marlinee with the assistance of Duncan for whom she telephoned at once to the Grape Protective Association, at last succeeded in gaining the details from her reluctant lips.

"Oh, I shouldn't have told you!" she cried hysterically. "I shouldn't have told you! I should have gotten ready and gone. He was right. It's where I belong. I've known it all along, that I would go at last!"

"Hush!" cried Marlinee, "you mustn't talk that way, dear child. You don't know what you're saying."

"Oh, no, no!" the girl moaned, "I've no business here with you who are good. It's no use, just as he said."

"Honey dear, you're sick. You're beside yourself. You are hysterical from this awful experience. When you are better, you'll feel differently. I'm going to give you this, it will quiet you and perhaps you'll sleep, and when you wake you'll be able to see things clearer. Don't be afraid, I shan't leave you. We will never leave you alone again." Marlinee gave the girl a powder prescribed at the hospital for her hours of hysteria, and the child presently sank into sleep. She arranged over the telephone with one of the office girls to take care of her unfinished work, and remained with Glad the rest of the day.

With the girl's story learned, Duncan sought Norris. His first impulse had been to call up the chief of police and give him a description of the man, but if found and arrested, the girl would have to identify him and thus be brought into publicity. They must secure her safety against the man's designs in some other way. In the telephone booth of the Star office he told Norris the story. The latter, white with rage, bit his lip in his perplexity. He itched to get his hands on the man's throat, but any move towards his discovery would, as Duncan suggested, involve Glad.

"No," he agreed at last, with reluctance, "I guess we can't do anything about it. Can't give it to the police, anyway. But leave it to me! I'll find the man yet and punish him with my own hands. I'll find him, damn him, if I have to hunt him down to the mouth of the pit."

He struck his hand on the desk suddenly. "I've got it, I believe. By Heck, I've got it! They're looking for a man right now, a white slavery case. The federal officers are in town today. This may be him. He was here, the man they want, three or four months ago; they know that. And then got out of town suddenly. They've heard he's back. By Gad! This may be him. That's why he hasn't showed

up before. They were on his trail. That's why he didn't take her with him that night after he drugged her. Something scared him. He got *on*. Wait! What night was that? You know, she told you.

"The eighteenth of April?" He was flipping the notes of his date-book feverishly. "The eighteenth! Let see, I've got it here, somewhere, the night of the raid on Emma White's house over in the tenderloin when they thought they had him. Here, here it is, the eighteenth!" he shourted. "Say *that's it*, that's him! Do you see? That's how he came to drop her after he'd done his devil's work that night at the cafe. Some one put him wise, and he skipped in the early morning, threw her out in the street, anywhere to get rid of her and get away. Oh, *damn* him! *Damn* him! *Damn* him!

"And now he comes back to finish his work. Well, we'll get him! We've got to get him. I'll put the officers on this minute." He snatched the receiver."

"But Glad," suggested Duncan.

"Oh Heck!" cried Norris. His collapse was humorous.

"Well," he was at it again, his news instinct abbetting his zeal for Glad and his craving for revenge. "I'll guard Glad all right, but I'll get him yet. Tell you what! I'll go to the federal officers. I'll have an excuse. You see I had the dope on this white slave story in April, when they were working on the case. Wilkins of the force tipped it off to me, and I'd turned the story into the desk when they got on that we had it, and called up and called off the boss. Said it'd spoil their case you know. Well, I'll tell them I've got something to give them on the case. I'll say that we heard here in a new way about the overtures of a man to a young woman today, good family, people not willing to have girl's

name used, but gave description, and I sized it up as the man they're after. See? No danger at all to Glad.

"Oh say, that's great, it's him all right! Why, you know there isn't any reason why he wouldn't have taken the little girl off this morning, especially after she fainted. He knew she was alone, watched and knew. The thing is done every day somewhere. But he was scairy, you see? Maybe he's got a tip already that the officers are about. There isn't a minute to lose. I'll tell McWhirter I've got a line on a story, and I'll go up there right now. Trust me," he called back at sight of Duncan's anxious face, "I won't give the little girl away."

In the days following, when Glad was being nursed and coaxed and petted back to a semblance of her former self, it was Norris who proved the rescuer; Norris who swept away the long nightmare of Glad's obsession and her courageous resistance to that unacknowledged and reclaiming emotion she had realized since their renewed acquaintance.

CHAPTER XXVII

With the new threat to Glad's welfare and peace of mind it was found necessary to remove her to a place where she could have constant attendance. Marlinee conceived the idea of taking the girl to her ranch home. Mammy was there, faithful Mammy, boarding the help and taking care of the chickens and turkeys. Mammy would be only too happy for Glad to do for and spoil.

Marlinee would spend every week-end, as usual at the "Wickiup", her ranch bungalow. Duncan and Norris would see them occasionally, and Mammy's strong arm and informed care would keep harm away from the little girl while she tried again to take hold on normal life from which a frightful fate seemed designed to snatch her.

The arrangement could not be put into effect, however, till the end of the week when Marlinee would be free to go to the country with Glad. In the meantime the services of a nurse were secured. Glad's nervous condition and the absence of the girls from the house demanding that she have attendance.

Two mornings after the catastrophe that induced Glad's relapse, Duncan, in the office of the Protective Association, was handed a note by a messenger boy. There were no charges. He signed for it and wheeling about in his chair to his desk opened and read. The boy waited.

"Mr. Cameron:—Let me see you tonight without fail at the Non Pareil at 2:30. I got something mighty important to tell you that has to do with that little friend of yours. You'll be sorry if you don't come, kid. Honest to God, this is straight. Give the head waiter your card.

"Molly."

Duncan frowned and said something under his breath. He looked up and saw the waiting boy.

"An answer?" he said.

"Yes, she said to wait."

He read the note again. His first impulse had been to tear it up and throw it in the waste basket. It was an obvious effort of the woman to abet the overtures he had repulsed at Blythe's cafes, but the suggestion concerning Glad caught in his mind. Import was added by her recent experience.

It was repulsive to him, the thought of acceding a meeting with this woman in such a place. If she had real news to impart, why did she not appoint another and different rendezvous. But his reason told him there was no more respectable place where such a woman could meet him. If it were a mere excuse for the sake of an appointment he would discover the fact at once and could leave her. Besides he had been to the Non Pareil before, risking to some extent his reputation by being seen there, if indeed he could risk anything in a company that compromised all who were found in it. He would go. He reached for a pen, hesitated, then wrote one word without signature:

"Coming."

He folded the note and sealed it in an envelope, unaddressed. "Here," he said to the boy and gave him a quarter. The latter went off whistling. Such transactions were a large part of his daily business.

Duncan was at the cafe at the hour appointed. He gave his card to the head waiter. It was a part of the arrangement that was most distasteful to him. A man may part with anything, in a risk for a large stake, but his name.

The waiter led Duncan between the rows of tables where respectability dines and takes its leave at twelve, and indecency takes the tables on the stroke and wines till morning. He led

Duncan down the room, where the same garish scene was being enacted as on the night of his previous visit, apparently by the same people, the painted, bedecked, blatant women with their wine spattered gowns; the blear eyed men staring vapidly at their coquetries, or by a new provocation of wine and passion seizing their partners violently about the waist and whirling away, caught up in the mad vortex.

He was led past the curtained boxes where glimpses of bestial revelry were caught at its height through the partings or where men and women, beyond reviving for the night were dragged by their partners and discarded while they sought other companions whose sense and zest was not yet exhausted. Here in the semi-privacy of one of these boxes was where Duncan had expected to meet the woman, but to his discomforture the man led him on, through the rear door and up the staircase he had observed before.

At the threshold Duncan drew back and was about to throw up the enterprise. It was a capital situation to find himself in. He cursed his quixotic impulses. Yet it was not an impulse. All day, just as he was about to annul the engagement his thought caught again on the issue, Glad. There might be real danger waiting her in spite of their precautions. The woman had shown in her interviews with him before a gleam of regard for the girl. Was it not possible that she had overheard some fiendish plot designed to snatch the child yet, from her friends? There was no way for it, he must go. He followed the man down the crimson twilight of the passageway till he stopped at a door and knocked. The woman opened it.

"Hello! Come in."

Duncan stopped in the doorway. "What did you want?" he asked. She laughed derisively.

"Well, we can't talk out here. Come in. You're not

afraid of nothin' are you?" He stepped inside and the door closed behind him. It had a spring lock.

"Well, how are you, kid? Sit down and make yourself at home. I like to see folks comfortable. What'll you have?" The table was well stocked with wine. She made a motion to pour him a glass but he waved it aside sternly. He was still standing. "What do you want? Why did you bring me here, in here? I expected to meet you out there where I saw you the other night." She laughed, a trailing amused laugh.

"Well, you didn't see any place out there just exactly suited to telling secrets, did you? Not what you might call a cozy corner for just you and me? *Say*, you're nervous, boy! And yet," she came suddenly from behind the table leaning one ringed hand on the stand, the other laid heavily on his shoulder, her rouged face in its jewelled harness pushed close to his.

"Say, *drop* it, kid! Cut it out. Take it from me I know your game! Playing the innocent, aren't you? One of your high-brow, goody-goody kind, just home from college, good as he went! Never been in a place like this before. Don't know anything about it!

"Yet you've been here all right, only you hadn't any time for Molly McFee. Molly McFee wasn't good enough for you. Or else you were a cheap guy, that's it. Didn't even want to order the drinks. I did it tonight, you see. Knew I'd have to," she laughed scornfully. He had shaken her hand from off him and drawn back a step as she talked. He was perfectly aware of the meaning of the situation. Why had he not thought of it before, her persistence, her continued reference to Glad in their evening meetings, her displeasure at his refusals to her solicitations? He was facing that most dangerous of creatures, a jealous and vicious woman. As he eyed her apparently in absolute self command, he was thinking

fast. He noted the lock on the door through which he had come. There were other doors, but they too were no doubt locked.

He relaxed suddenly and turning to a chair seated himself. "Yes," he said, "all right, but you had something you wanted to tell me." He bent forward, smiling easily, turning his hat nonchantly in his hand. She eyed him with curiosity, surprise.

"What?" she said unguardedly.

"You said in your note that you had something to tell me about my friend," he spoke carefully, "the friend we talked about before. You brought me here with the idea you had something of importance to say about her. That was why I came, the *only* reason!"

An ugly look passed over her face. She poured out a glass for herself and drank it off quickly. As she put it down she looked at him. Her eyes grew to narrow slits. "Yes, your friend, always your *friend*!" she underlined the word. "That's just what I want to talk about." She threw back her head and her face flamed to the forehead under the white paste.

"Your *friend*, that's just what she is, and I knew it all right! You tried to fool me. You would have nothing of me, because you're a hypocrite, a cheap skate too! It might be found out. It would cost you too much! But this girl, this little girl, that you pretend to befriend, that you take to your house, the house of another *friend*, by the way; that's two, you know!"

Duncan sprang from his chair. "You lie!" he cried. He would have taken her by the throat but he remembered she was a woman. He siezed her arm in his great hand. She wrenched it away caressing the hurt with malignant eyes but he continued:

"I'm not through, oh, I'm not through with *you*!" she cried.

"Maybe I don't know *all.* Likely I don't, but I can guess about things. You were her friend back *there,* weren't you? Her *good* friend, oh yes she told me so. Guess you were sort of disappointed when you got back here. Guess you kind of thought you were stung when you come to pay the hospital bills!"

He gave a cry and sprang at her, but she evaded him, sprang to one side, then turned and clasped him about the neck. Her face pressed his, her arms urged him to her bosom, her voice came in panting caress:

"Oh I wouldn't get sore, kid, if I was you! That's all right, I was just kiddin! Come, I always liked you even if you ain't treated me square." Her eyes were coals of fire, her hands bands of steel that bound and burnt him. He strained against them, flung them off with a curse and threw her from him. She fell heavily against the door, screaming. It opened, another opened, the wall seemed to give at every point and let in faces, forms, men pushing and ogling, women, screaming and climbing on chairs to look over the heads of the men, girls frightened and clinging to their partners, a policeman pushing his way with oaths and brute force, and *Blythe*!

The woman gained her feet and sprang at him. The officer's arm intercepted. She turned with vile curses for him. The policeman laid a heavy hand on her shoulder and reached for Cameron. The woman was screaming, protesting in hysterical terms with wild accusations. He had refused her her price. He was in her debt for many liaisons. He was a cheap guy who refused to patronize legitimate business but traded on innocent girls.

Duncan listened, dumb, looking with stupefaction on the crowding faces of the throng. It was as though he was ob-

serving a cleverly played farce, or was it a dream? Blythe interceded, clapping him on the shoulder genially:

"Well, old man. I'm sure surprised to see you here. Not just the place you'd expect to find one interested in the Uplift, eh? But maybe you were trying the Uplight on Molly McFee. How about it Molly?"

"I don't know what you mean. I don't know what *this* means!" cried Duncan. 'It's a put up job, a plot, a damned plot, all of it! I came here to—"

"Oh yes, that's all right my boy, *that's* all right! We understand," he turned to the crowd with a laughs that maddened Duncan. "Nothing doing here, Ortly," to the policeman whose hand dropped away from Duncan at the word. "Run along Molly and no noise, it's thirty days for you! I don't stand for this sort of thing here, you know. The policeman pushed the girl, sobbing hysterically, through the crowd. "Get out now, all of you!" the crowd vanished like a nightmare.

"That's all right, boy, don't look so cut up about it!" continued Mr. Blythe, setting up a chair and righting an overturned bottle, the contents of which were staining the floor. "Boys will be boys, we understand that. I couldn't think you were quite the exception you tried to make out to be. Yet you *did* fool me some. I wouldn't have looked for quite *this*. You oughtn't to hit it up quite so hard young man, really," waving his hands toward the empty bottles and the disordered room.

"Mr. Blythe," cried Duncan laying hold of him, "this is all a cursed damnable plot and I like a fool, *walked* into it. Don't you believe that? Can't you believe it?" He recited the details beginning with the note from the woman and reminding him of Glad, the girl of whom he had spoken.

'Oh, ho!" nodded Blythe, "so *that's* the way of it. I knew

there must be a girl in the case somewhere. Told you the other day, you know. So it's all fixed and regular and Molly, the little she-devil is jealous, eh?"

"Jealous!" exclaimed Duncan scornfully. There was odiousness in the intimation. "I don't know why! I've never had anything to do with her, except that I've seen her in the street and other places, sometimes, and she's solicited me."

"How about here?" sneered Blythe, "and at the Non Pareil, the nights you've been seeing the underworld, taking notes on my business. You know I was aware of those little private visits you've been making." Duncan colored.

"That's nothing to me," he said. "I told you I'd been investigating, looking into it myself, that I hadn't taken anybody's word for it."

"Well then," laughed Blythe, "it looks something like a boomerang. No offence, it's kind of funny that's all, *devilish* funny, ain't it?" Blythe was seized with extravagant mirth.

"No, it's not funny," exclaimed Duncan, his face was white. "And the whole thing has come through the cursed kind of places you keep, it's how the little girl had her down fall and it's how I came to get into this damned compromising business tonight, the whole town looking in." He was breathing hard, the seriousness of the affair gripping him. "What's to be done?" he demanded.

Blythe clapped him on the shoulder with returned good-will. "Forget it, boy, why this is nothing! Of course the rough-house isn't pleasant or a part of my business. I make a point of keeping an orderly place at least, you've noticed that. But as far as this sort of thing is concerned, what did I tell you the other day? And I might add, that a young fellow isn't a young fellow if he don't take his fling at this sort of thing sometime or other."

"But I don't agree with you," returned Duncan, "and

it's not what I came here for, I wasn't brought up that way. The whole thing makes me *sick.*"

"Oh, well, cheer up and come along;" he guided Duncan, in his ill concealed disgust, out through a back way to the street.

"Now go home and to bed and forget it," admonished Blythe. "Course I believe you. I know you, I was only fooling. You're one of the straight kind. I know that. There's no harm done, only, well it *was* something of a joke. Ha! Ha! And if the papers should happen to get hold of it or anything, but they won't, don't you fret. Good night."

Duncan did not follow Blythe's admonition. He presently found his room but without knowing how he went there. The full significance of the night's affair had gripped him on the moment of Blythe's leaving and he had walked in a trance of horror and conjecture that took no note of things exterior. Now he entered his room. He tossed his hat on the bed and sat down, his face in his hands, his eyes staring blankly before him trying to study the situation. His mind was held in a cramp of apprehension, tortured with the thought of the publicity already gained and of another fear, the one Blythe facetiously suggested.

If it should get into the papers before he could get to any one, to his friends, to Corinne, to tell them the straight of it. And how could he tell the facts to all, to his friends, his hundreds of friends in the city and throughout the valley. The cold sweat stood out on him. The fingers with which he held a match to his cigar—he had been smoking absently, desperately —were stiff with nervous cold.

And how could he explain, anyway, in a manner that would make the explanation public, as public as the story would be. He could not use the name of Glad for an excuse to defend him in an affair that, barring the roughhouse feature, would

be considered by many men as legitimate, ordinary. Oh, the whole abominable affair, it was maddening.

He might call up the papers, it occurred to him, and buy the boys off, but his acquaintance with the Sun people was slight; the Searchlight reporters he knew not at all, they were new in town. Besides, he threw away his cigar in disgust, call them up, give the affair away, when perhaps they hadn't gotten hold of it at all? What a fool.

Anyway, hope glimmered, Blythe would see that the thing was shut up. Blythe couldn't afford to have his place figure in such a way. Why, of course. Why hadn't he thought of it. They were *even* now, he and Blythe, thanks to this wretched girl Blythe had had his revenge for Duncan's rejection of his offer, his revenge and his laugh. After it Blythe was immediately placated, his genial friend; had slapped him on the back and assured him he could go home and sleep without anxiety, the only danger was from the newspapers and they would be looked after. That was what Blythe had said and Blythe was powerful.

Pshaw. He had lost his head, had had a regular brain storm. Well, now he'd go to bed. He was dead tired, also his head was splitting from the numberless cigars with which he had smoked out his trouble from its lair; he was ordinarily a very sane smoker. Four o'clock, four hours to catch some sleep, get his breakfast and get to the office. He threw off his clothes and turned off the light. One thing, he couldn't have done differently. He had to go. The fact that it was a hoax instead of Glad in peril made no difference. It was the comforting thought that sent him off into sound sleep.

CHAPTER XXVIII

When Norris entered the news-room of the Journal office the next morning, he found McWhirter crouched over the morning paper in inflamed and expanded condition, his speech effectually blocked by his untoward emotions. He reached the sheet to Norris without a word but as the latter read all his young anathemas were not sufficient to express his feelings. The head ran:

"ROUGH HOUSE AT THE NON PAREIL LAST NIGHT
Woman of Under-World accuses Prominent Citizen.
Youth of Well Known Family in Unsavory Affair.
Other Liaisons Implied."

Beneath was a highly colored account of the affair with Duncan's name used.

The other boys arrived and fell upon the sheet with incredulous ejaculations. The morning daily had, during its short existence, been guilty of many indiscretions and breaches of the code of decent journalism in an ambition to be counted the yellow sheet of the town, but it had never accomplished such a dastardly thing as this before.

"Oh, the dirty skunks! The skulking cowardly ginks! The *fools*, to undertake anything like that on Duncan with his reputation and following."

"What do you suppose there is to it, anyway?" asked Hayward. "It's sure a fake, that's certain. Let's see the Sun. Nothing in it, wouldn't have been anyway, if there *was* anything to it. *They're* white."

"And what would the Searchlight handle it for?" demanded Barton.

"Just out of pure cussedness, out of damn fool idiocy.

'Cause they haven't the ability to get out a decent sheet, to get real news." McWhirter was getting back his speech. "They ought to be ridden out of town, a paper that'd do a thing like that!" His further reflections were not printable.

"What are you going to do about it?" asked Winston.

"Do about it! Well, that's to be seen. Norris get Duncan upon the line." But Norris had already vanished. He was in the telephone booth frantically trying to get Duncan's house, when Duncan himself strode into the news office.

He was white to the lips and he held, clutched in his fingers, a copy of the Searchlight that he had just bought of a newsboy outside. He had glanced at the page casually, scanning the telegraphic news, then his eyes turned to the local page and the story caught his eye. The blood left his head as he read and surged back again with a rush that hurt. One thought flashed into his mind, vivid, enlightening, the one that had evaded him the night before when his conjectures as to the woman's reasons for pressing her solicitations, the inadequacy of the theory of her jealousy, teased him. *Blythe*! Blythe had planned it, planned it all for his undoing. Blythe had given it to the newspaper. Subsidied the new sheet for his purposes.

He was in front of the Journal office. By instinct he turned, his mind on fire. The Journal was his paper, his father's paper. It was the Searchlight's natural rival. He would find redress. Blythe would smart for this. He would tell the whole story, it would be plain enough. It was the kind of damnable plot that men sometimes play on another.

The boys sprang up at sight of Duncan and Hayward pushed a chair toward him but he ignored it and stood with his back to the wall, facing them with clenched fist as though the Journal five, bending concerned eager faces on him were Blythe, the enemy. From his stark and rigid face, his blue

eyes looked out, curiously young, with an expression of incredible outrage.

"Oh say, here he is!" cried little Norris bursting from the telephone booth. "Say, what's there in it? It's a damn lie ain't it? Oh, we'll fix *them* all right." He pushed into the group surrounding Duncan.

"It's a lie," said Duncan, "and it isn't. It's all facts except that they colored 'em up, gave them the wrong look, played them up to suit the taste." The boys looked at each other in hesitation, embarrasment. Duncan caught their expression.

"No, listen. That's all right, you'll understand in a moment. Wait till I get hold of myself." He took a chair then, bending forward, his eyes flaming, his words coming between set teeth.

"I was there all right. I was sent for and I went. I was sent for. The woman sent a note telling me she wanted to see me about something, about, about" he paused, suddenly and went weak. His jaw dropped, his arms fell to his sides and he sat staring stupidly.

"What's the matter?" cried McWhirter. "Say, he's all in. He's hurt or something."

"Yes," said Duncan rising unsteadily to his feet, "Yes, I forgot. I *am* sick. I'll go. I'll tell you later, another time, later." His words trailed off incoherently as he rose, slowly, like an old man, and moved away. The boys stared at each other with mouths open.

"What the devil. Say he's drunk, no he ain't, he's sick or something.

"Norris, go after him, go and see. Ask him what's the matter. Bring him back. Gosh, there's more in this than you think," cried McWhirter, his news sense rioting.

But Norris for once was out of commission. He stood staring after Duncan, astonishment and dismay rooting him to the spot. At McWhirter's words he broke from his stupor

and sprinted after Duncan, taking the steps at a bound. He reached him at the corner. Duncan was still moving in a sort of daze, his eyes staring before him.

"Duncan, for the Lord's sake, what's the matter?" cried Norris. "Have you gone off your nut? Say buck up, it ain't so bad. Why didn't you go on? Why didn't you tell us? You had something to say all right." Duncan paused and leaned against the palings of the courthouse yard.

"Glad," he said, his face white and wondering. "Glad, it was about her the woman wrote. I forgot, somehow, I was so mad. I was wild, I was so mad. It was Glad. She wrote she had something to tell me about her. I thought it might concern her safety, since that last time, and I went. Of course I couldn't tell them, back there, and I wasn't quick enough. I couldn't seem to think up anything else that would hold water. It's made me look bad, I guess," he stared at at Norris out of his blue eyes, helplessly. Norris siezed his lax hand in a violent grip and his young eyes looked worship.

"Duncan," he breathed, "you're a Prince. But here, we mustn't stand here." Already one or two passersby had eyed Duncan with interest. "Let's get somewhere where we can talk. Going to the Association office?"

"Yes," said Duncan rousing himself, "there won't be anybody there for an hour, I've been going early." They sought the building, climbing a half dozen flights of stairs. The elevator boy had not come yet.

Duncan unlocked the door and they went in. "Sit down," he said. He took a chair near Norris, his poise had returned and with it a grim attitude of fight. "I've got it all sized up," he said, "and if it wasn't for the complications I'd make Blythe smart for it, give you the whole story. It was a plot, a deliberate plot for which the woman was made use of. I'll tell you all about it." He began, detailing the entire story

of his dealings with Blythe, his investigation, nightly, of the cafes and the details of the evening's affair. Norris followed him alert, eager. Beside his interest on Duncan's account the story held all the dramatic elements of a great newspaper story, the sort that falls to a reporter's lot but a few times in his career.

Lord, what a yarn. He could see it played up in the Journal's best style on the first page. What a scoop to put over his contemporaries, the morning papers, the sensation of the year; Blythe, the big man of the town caught in such a scheme. What a knock out for him, for the Searchlight. What an exoneration for Duncan.

As Duncan talked he pieced motive with motive with all the genius of the reporter's mind, the news instinct that is like the detective's sense in its specialization, in its talent for discovering thread ends. It was all plain, plainer to him than to Duncan, even, for he knew of the latter's popularity. He had the gossip of the political world at his tongue's end. He knew that there was nothing to keep Duncan from the legislature if he wanted it; and Blythe coveted this man's talents in his own particular interests.

Blythe, Norris saw it all now, Blythe, whose enterprises included every phase of the liquor business needed to have his power behind the law makers. To have one of those law-makers a partner of himself, drawing his livelihood from the same kind of business, would mean the assurance of vigorous work at the capitol in the booze interests.

But Duncan had refused on the very grounds of disapproval of Blythe's business. He refused to acknowledge that vice was a part of the liquor business and that it must therefore be condoned by laws made for the purpose. He was an idealist and held an exalted, impossible idea of the industry. He was not ready to withdraw from the business himself,

as a grower, nor from efforts in the interests of what he considered the clean and honorable end of the liquor business. He was, still, in the minds of the wine people, a proper and desirable candidate as their representative. *And just here came the crux.*

There were not a few other idealists, men of illusions, like Duncan, valuable supporters of the liquor cause. The inner circle of the liquor interests, the liquor men who played with the hands of vice were not prepared to come into the open, even among their own people, and make a stand for that at which many, particularly the growers of wine grapes, would revolt. There would be division at a time when the liquor interests of the state had most need to stand together, defeat at the hands of the prohibition people.

To discredit Duncan, to shatter his reputation as the clean, upright young fellow he was supposed to be—this was Blythe's plot. It was a diabolical one that risked nothing for Blythe. The smirk regrets expressed in an interview appended to the Searchlight story in which Blythe regretted the notoriety lent to his irreproachable refreshment resort, by the introduction by Duncan of a woman of such character, and the creating of such a scene effectively exonerated his house of discredit. And Blythe, a talented reader of character, had banked on Duncan's chivalry, his loyalty to Glad, to block any steps toward public exoneration. Oh, it was devilish! Norris chewed the end of his unsmoked cigarette and muttered unprintable ejaculations as Duncan talked.

"If you'd only told me," he groaned, "if you'd only taken me or some of the boys into your confidence about Blythe, about this offer, we could have given you Blythe's dimensions in a minute, there isn't anything we don't know about men; our business is a clearing house for character."

"I'm used to tending to my own affairs and working them

out myself," explained Duncan. "I didn't want to go to anybody else about Blythe. It didn't seem square after he'd made me such an offer. I didn't want to imply anything wrong about him if it wasn't there." Norris groaned:

"You're too darned idealistic, Duncan," he exclaimed. "You're chuck full of it, of the chivalry at the Round Table age; it doesn't go in this Anno Domino, 1914. I tell you it doesn't," and Norris bent the anxious eyes of a grandfather on Duncan's moody and pondering face.

"Oh, cut it out," cried Duncan, he had no mind to be preached to by a stripling. "I'm tired of the talk of 'idealism', it sounds like Blythe. Idealism! You make me a Sissy. Is it 'idealism' to be square with a man and expect him to be square with you? 'Idealism' to do what's straight in front of you to do, like looking after that little sister of Garrisons? If that's 'idealism', well, call it so if you want to." He squared his big shoulders impatiently, reached for and lighted a cigar.

Norris was on his feet. His arm went impulsively across Duncan's stubborn back where the big muscles stood out under the thin shirt. The caress was almost that of a girl. "By Gad, Duncan! It *is* idealism, and of the biggest sort. The kind a lot of men ought to have and there'd be no such darned mess as this you're in right now. I haven't words to tell you how I feel about your loyalty to my little girl, *not* Garrison's sister, you know." The bright color flashed up in his face. "I suppose I don't realize it," his voice had grown suddenly husky, "somehow I don't take these things so seriously, I mean the trouble Glad's had. It seems so apart from herself. It's as though some white little butterfly or something had inadvertantly been dashed into the gutter; soiled and hurt for a moment, but as soon as out it was itself, clean and pure again, for nothing can really touch *her*; the sweet, pure woman within

her. Do you understand? But I suppose it would go hard with her if people knew, hard, always."

"That's just it," interrupted Duncan, "the *world*. That's why I've tried to save Glad from publicity, to make it so no one will ever know, can ever point a finger in scorn at her, at you as her husband. They mustn't know. We must guard her, no matter what happens. Why, even the reputation given me by this damnable hatched up affair couldn't begin to hurt me, as the facts concerning her experiences, unresponsible as she is for them, could forver damn her."

He spoke with the concern he had growingly felt for the girl and Norris. He was not sorry for the sacrifice he had made. It was as he had said, no sacrifice, but the involuntary course of his impulses that had, from his infancy, been utilized in the line of duty and unhesitating service to others. Back in his brain one cry, the cry of his own self-interest—the last at all times to be served—raised with agonized appeal, the name "Corinne."

His mother, Marlinee; he thought of these, too, but he could tell them, they would understand. Corrine! How could he bring to his defense now all the facts that he had failed to apprise her of before, of Glad, his investigation of Blythe's places after their unqualified endorsement of him and his proposals. Why had he not told Corinne of Glad before, as Marlinee had suggested? She had seemed to think he should. How could he make Corinne understand now? Norris' thoughts were running fast along the same line:

"Well, you shouldn't have to suffer for my sake, and Glad's," he said. "We must think some way out."

"Oh no, let it go," exclaimed Duncan desperately. "It's no matter about me, I guess I can live through it."

"You shan't. We've got to find a way out. I've got to get McWhirter some word right now, he sent me after you."

"Curse McWhirter," exclaimed Duncan, "it's none of his business." For once he condemned newspaper zeal and forgot for the moment that he had run into the office for vindication at the first word of his affair. Norris was thinking hard.

"It won't hurt to tell him this much, and it'll square you; the same that I gave the federal officers the other day. That a girl you and I know, of good family, who must be shielded, has been persecuted by the overtures of a man found to be a panderer; that this woman who had solicited you, as those women do, and was refused by you, made out in her note that she wanted to see you, that she knew something about this man's designs; that you went for that cause, and then you can tell all about Blythe, you know, and his motives for this. But wait. No, it needs something else. This ain't enough." He paused and gnawed the end of his cigarette in perplexity, defeat.

"No, that won't do, darn it! They'd say, anybody would say, that the whole defense was faked up. We need something else. If we could get the woman's word, an affidavit to the effect that she was bribed. We must find her, try to get it. Don't you see, there's the key, the key to your case and to the biggest newspaper story that was ever landed in this town. What's the name of the girl?"

"Molly McFee."

"Molly McFee!" Norris' yell raised him from his chair. "I've *got* it then, leave it to me. Oh *say*, just leave it to *me*. Lord! what a chance!" He was pounding Duncan hysterically on the back with his fists. Duncan wheeled on him with open mouth:

"What's the matter, are you crazy?"

"Crazy nothing, we've got it, that's all. I know this Molly McFee. Got to beat it this minute for the jail, before they

let her out," he grabbed his hat and dashed for the door. On the threshold he turned back. "Say, lay low, don't say anything to anybody. Stay right here and be ready to come when I call you up." He was gone. Duncan sat and stared as the door banged behind him. He went to the window and looked out and shortly saw Norris hitting up a hot pace in the direction of the city jail. Half way there Norris turned into a small grocery store and called up McWhirter on the phone. McWhirter's greeting was not cordial:

"Hello! What the devil do you mean by taking all day to a thing like this? Where are you? Why don't you come back to the office? I haven't given you this assignment anyhow, it takes careful handling and a big head." Norris ignored the implication in the zeal of his interests. At the moment, Duncan's friend, bent on his exoneration, had vanished and the reporter was in possession. He was perfectly aware that to land the story meant the making of him as far as local newspaper fame was concerned. It meant a quick jump from emergency man and general roustabout to "courthouse", maybe, in place of Hayward when the latter took the lay-off his growing habits prophesied.

"Come back, nothing," he shouted. "Why, I've got the whole story, or will have in fifteen minutes more. Duncan's told me all about it and it's the biggest thing the town's known for a blue moon. A big plot that involves Blythe and maybe some others. I say, McWhirter," he dropped to conciliation, "you mustn't call me off now. Duncan's my personal friend and gave me what he wouldn't have given any of the other boys. I've just got a little matter down at the city jail to clear up and I'll have the whole thing in my hands and we'll put it all over the Searchlight in tonight's issue." He paused and waited in nerve racking suspense for the word from the other end.

"Well hurry up then, and be damned quick about it," was the cheering admonition, and the next moment Norris was beating it down the street. He "beat it" across the next square, but as he came in sight of the jail he paused and dropped into a leisurely saunter. He swung easily up the steps and into the office. If Blythe was behind the affair, it wouldn't be an easy matter to get an interview with Molly McFee.

"Hello Jeff," he said casually, to the desk sergeant. "How's business, anything doing?"

"Oh not much." The man came out from behind the rails and stood in the lobby with him. "Nothing but a few drunks and Molly McFee. I reckon you saw about that in the Searchlight tbis morning."

"Yes," said Norris, he struck a match on the cement wall and lighted a cigarette, and handed his case to the jailer.

"Have a smoke?" The jailer took one. Norris' cigarettes were of the best quality.

"How about it? Molly run in for a 'moral example', the story faked up by the Searchlight?"

"Naw, there was a row down there all right. Didn't you see who? Cameron of La Mesa vineyard. *He'd* been run in, too, but Blythe happened in just at the right time. Blythe owns the cafe you know. Blythe didn't like to see Cameron bawled out so to satisfy the crowd we just gathered in Molly. She'll get out in a few days."

"Hum," said Norris. "I kind of wanted to see her. The Searchlight beat us to it but we've got to have something on it—prominent citizen, Cameron, you know. I understand Molly made some pretty stiff charges. Maybe she can give me some more dope on it. Think I could see her?"

"Aw, guess you better not. The less said about it the better. Blythe was anxious to save Cameron, you know."

"That's so, *all* right." Norris started off indifferently,

then he turned back. "Oh, by the way, how did that matter come out between you and the Chief over that jail break; the story we held out, for you, you know? Did you manage to square yourself?"

"Oh yes, sure," answered the man, hastily. "Sure, that was fixed up all right. It was awful good of you to keep that quiet."

"Yes, well it was unusual. We had the whole dope on it you know. McWhirter wanted to run it anyway, but I told him better not. He said the other day we might get a new line on it, he didn't believe the thing had blown over so I thought I'd ask you."

"Oh sure, sure! It's all over, tell him that. It's all O. K. There ain't anything to be said about it, really. You won't print anything about it will you?" He came close to Norris, soliciting him anxiously.

"Oh no, I reckon not, since it's all over," said Norris. "Lets see, did you say I could look in on Molly?"

The sergeant showed Norris up the stairway into the woman's department. He paused, then unlocked the door and handed Norris the key.

"Be sure and lock it when you come out," he said.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Marlinee, whose time for reaching the office was a half hour later than that of the boys found the newsroom vacated but for McWhirter. The latter was at his desk, hunched over the devastating issue of the Searchlight and in deep thought.

"Top o' the mornin' to yez, Misther McWhirter," called Marlinee airily, in excellent imitation of the tongue of his forefathers." What's th' news?"

"J' see that?" asked McWhirter briefly, pointing to the cafe story. Marlinee bent over his shoulder and read. The next moment McWhirter was on his feet.

"Don't do it. *Don't do it!*" he stuttered. "*Don't faint,* I say!" He reached frantically for a chair and pushed the white and panting girl into it. It flashed through his mind, too late that Duncan was a particular friend of Marlinee, possibly her finance. "Oh Lord! Oh Lord! What an ass I am," he flayed himself. He was eminently relieved on seeing the color rush back to Marlinee's face and her eyes flash with challenge.

"Mr. McWhirter," she cried. "That's a lie, you know its a lie, but what are we going to do about it?"

"Well, it isn't a lie. That's the trouble," said McWhirter, delicately, fearful of a feminine relapse. "Duncan was there all right. He was in this morning and started to tell us about it. Seemed to think there was some plot, or something. Then he had to leave before he got through. I'm waiting to get a line on it now from him, sent little Norris for it." He did not care to impart to Marlinee his uneasiness in regard to Duncan's strange conduct. Personally he thought Cameron

was drunk, not over his last night's affair yet. McWhirter had no faith in any man until he was shown.

"Let me see it again," cried the girl. She seized the paper and read, pondering each line, and a light fell upon her.

"McWhirter!" she cried, "I know all about it, or believe I do. It *was* a plot, a plot a woman of that sort might think of to entrap a man that her wiles can't gain. I know of this woman, that she was interested in Duncan, made overtures to him. (Duncan had told her of his investigation of the two cafes.) "She got him there on a pretext at last, and I know what that pretext was. It was—" But suddenly Marlinee's mouth closed, her head dropped. She sat tapping the desk with her pencil, embarrassed and silent.

"Well, for heaven's sake, say it!" cried McWhirter. " *You* going to throw a fit, catch a brain storm, like the rest of 'em? Grab your lid and beat it, like Duncan did a minute ago? Or stand rooted to the spot 's'f you'd seen a ghost, like Norris? Say, what's there in it? For a fellow that's been as little of a lady's man as Duncan is reputed to have been I must say he's stirring up a devil of a fuss now he's got in the running."

Marlinee's mind was dizzily groping for safe ground. Duncan had spared Glad. That was what made him leave, suddenly and compromisingly, when just on the point of explanation. Well she must save her, too, but just at that moment feminine emotions rose in her distracted bosom and she could have shaken with perfectly good will the soft and endearing little kitten she was sheltering at her home and who had precipitated all the trouble. "Wasn't a man's reputation as important as a woman's?" fumed Marlinee to herself. "Must Duncan be downed by a vicious story in his own town without a word in his own defense for the sake of this foolish little puss!" Well there was some things she could tell; as much enlightenment

as Norris gave the officers to help in their search, and she would.

"Mr. McWhirter," she said earnestly. 'I know how this woman managed her appointment, and why Duncan refused to tell her subterfuge. It was because it would involve another, an innocent young girl, whom he shrank from brining into publicity. But if he had thought in time, it needn't have. This girl is a friend of mine and of Norris, that's another reason he stopped. It just occured to him. She is visiting me now, out at my home on the vineyard. She was in town with me here, before, but I took her out there because she was being persecuted by the attentions and solicitations of a man we believe to be a professional panderer. We have notified the officers about him. Norris thinks he is the man wanted just now on a white slavery charge. This woman was in the employ of the man, we thought, or were afraid. She annoyed Duncan about the girl, asking about her when ever she saw him. And yet, we were puzzled that she would be so persistent and open about it. We thought maybe she had heard about the man's designs, and for some reason wanted to frustrate them," Marlinee was speaking with care, in an effort to keep her story logical and to the facts, without entangling the story of Glad's first experience.

"Don't you see, Duncan got word from the woman that she wanted to see him about this young girl, my friend. Duncan went, thinking it might be important. No, he didn't say anything to me about it. He wouldn't be apt to. Besides," Marlinee caught at the excuse with a relief, "I was away from the office yesterday, don't you remember? And Duncan didn't know where I was even if he had wanted to tell me. But that's it, Mr. McWhirter. I'm sure of it, I know it. It was in order to shield the girl, a mere child, that he wouldn't tell." McWhirter knitted his eyebrows as he pondered,

then his face cleared and he threw back his shoulders as if casting off a weight.

"Well then, that's all right, and I don't see for the life of me what was the use of all this brain storm business over it; wouldn't have hurt the little girl to have told *that* much."

"Oh well, you know Duncan is different from some folks; he has exalted ideas of chivalry, and then—Why, Norris was right here and he couldn't have, without speaking to him first for Norris" (Yes, she *would* tell him, it would help that much more.) Norris is engaged to the girl. Don't you see?"

McWhirter drew a long whistle. "That *kid*, well what do you know about that! Well," he grinned. "He's hot and heavy on the case right now. Jumped at it like a terrier after a rat. He's run down Duncan and telephoned a minute ago he had all the story except something he wanted to get from the jail. Norris in pursuit of a friend's vindication, his sweethearts rescue and reportorial fame. Sounds like a 'movie' doesn't it? Well the days of romance aren't over yet."

Marlinee waited in racking expectation of Norris' return. Should she have told McWhirter? Did Duncan tell Norris his reasons for withholding the explanation and would the latter take the authority to use Glad's story to vindicate Cameron, or would they have arranged some other feasible explanation that would eliminate Glad from the affair and yet exonerate Duncan? If the latter, then she had spoiled all. She must get hold of Norris before he came back. She tried the jail but failed to locate him. She would call up Duncan at the Grape Association. She could say little over the wire but would try and learn the line of defense determined upon. The sound of Duncan's voice reassured her, it was firm and self-possessed and brought composure to her own senses.

"Duncan," she said, steadily, "I've seen it and understand all. What are you going to do about it? what have you and Norris decided on? Just a word, so that I will know what to say. As much as Norris told the officers, Duncan?" she added anxiously.

"Yes, said Duncan. "That was what we thought. Norris will be back to the office soon, he thought. He saw a way out. He'll tell you. Don't worry." Marlinee hung up the receiver and dropped forward on the telephone desk, weak from the reaction and relief. At the Association, Whitten, Jones and Powell, friends of Duncan and members of the Association, dropped in one by one. Each had read the Searchlight's astounding story and each in turn fell on Duncan with ejaculations of amazement and anathemas for the morning paper. Others came in with the same indignation.

"It's a damn shame for the Searchlight to run such a thing," exclaimed Powell. "They ought to be boycotted."

"And Blythe hadn't any call to talk in such pious manner about the reputation of his house-guests. Everybody knows his house all right. Say, you'll put 'em through for this, the Searchlight folks, won't you Cameron?" contributed Whitten.

"Sure, I would," agreed Powell, "and we'll give you all the help we can. It's a cursed nasty trick just now at the beginning of the campaign. I'm surprised at Blythe. He could have shut this up and I should have thought he would. He ought to be a little more interested in your success than anybody else."

"I can't say anything about it just now, gentlemen," said Duncan. "Though I appreciate your kindness. I'm deciding what move to make. Sometimes its best to let a thing like that go by."

"Sure," assented Jones, "anybody'd know it was colored up to suit the yellow taste of a yellow dog like the Searchlight

editor. As far as the affair itself is concerned, Oh well." he shrugged his shoulders and clapped Duncan jovially on the back. "Nobody begrudges a young fellow like you his fling, eh, men?"

Duncan winced. It was one of the features of the brain racking puzzle he was facing. His inability to clear himself would commit him uncompromisingly to the wordly viewpoint of most men regarding these things. That he would not suffer in the eyes of the world, of his friends, with anything like the condemnation that he expected was a matter of surprise and shock. He resented the policy that restrained their judgment of him, he strained with all the fierce prejudice of his early training and his own convictions against embracing such a code of morality. But he was bound hand and foot by circumstances, events of so bewildering a nature that in utter hopelessness of working out the solution he was possessed of calm desperation.

He had one over-whelming desire, to get to Mr. Cummings and tell him all. With Mr. Cummings he would withold not a detail, even to Glad's story. It was due him as the father of Corinne to know every circumstance that would assure him the affianced husband of his daughter was a man of irreproachable life. His loyalities involved two women but of the two his promised bride was due the preference.

He had the office girl call up the Cummings home and inquire for Mr. Cummings. He could say little over the 'phone but he wanted to beg Mr. Cummings to reserve his judgment until he could see him. Corinne herself was at the beach and he would write to her. But Mr. Cummings was not at home and as Duncan turned back to his desk the former entered gravely, with inquiring face. Duncan dismissed the girl and closing the door after her pulled up a chair for him. The latter had just come from Blythe's. He had had no intentions

of going to him first but had met him in front of his office building and on the impulse made inquiry into the affair. The latter had urged him into his office and had given his version of the story.

"Pretty bad, I'm sorry," said Blythe, "I remember that Duncan was popular with your family, attentive to your daughter some what, isn't he?" Mr. Cummings winced, and recalled Corinne's critism of Blythe's manners.

"But it couldn't be helped. I did the best I could for him If it hadn't been for me he'd have been run in, too, for disturbing the peace. As luck would have it I was there last night on a tour of inspection. I make a point to keep every department of my business under my eye, and was on the ground just in time Don't know that I would have saved Duncan on his own account for the situation was a bad one, as you'll admit, and has lent unpleasant notoriety to the cafe. But a feeling for his mother and his father, I used to be one of his father's friends you know, made me do what I could for him. It's damned unfortunate the Searchlight got the story. A muckraking, one-horse sheet, that! But as long as it had it, I had to set myself right, you see that of course.

"Fact is, a young fellow like that ought to be shown up. Now I'm not squeamish at all; I haven't anything to say about the kind of affairs the normal youngster entertains, but this was raw, I say, and especially in view of Cameron's presumptions and the show his friends were giving him here. I guess all the woman said was true, and more; at least according to gossip he's been going some right here in his own town; some young woman up on Howard Street.

"You don't meant the little newspaper girl he takes out some times! I won't have a word about Marlinee Madison, I know her! She and my daughter were school friends cried Mr. Cummings. He was fond of Marl nee.

"Madison? No, that ain't the name, its another. Sombody he used to know back East, extraordinary pretty girl they say, high-bred, friend of his college chum back there. Particularly nasty case, I call it!"

Mr. Cummings had been listening with growingly anxious face. The evidences were suspicious. He himself had met Duncan with a remarkably pretty girl whom he did not know, Corinne and he. Duncan was either pre-occupied at the time or did not wish to see them. He had never spoken to them of a friend from the East although he had talked with apparent freedom of his life there and of his friend Garrison. Why had he neglected to speak of the girl? Why had he not brought her to their house, made her acquainted with them, if his interest in her was honorable? The thing looked compromising, terribly compromising, but he refused to accept the interpretations of Blythe and hoped despairingly for another explanation of the affair. It had already accomplished this much, he forsaw, eliminated the possiblity of partnership with Blythe. Blythe spoke of the matter himself with apparent regret.

"The whole thing's inexplicable, really! I'd made Cameron an offer, an offer of partnership in my business. You'll be surprised no doubt, and it was something unusual I own, and worth while for a young fellow of his age and prospects. But I saw what we all have, the timber in the man. Duncan had the matter under consideration but I will say that this effectively ends all negotiations. A man that can throw a friend down like that just at the start wouldn't be a safe one for a partner. I never would stand for excess among my men, in any line, and I certainly would expect my partner to be a man of dignity and self-respect. It makes Cameron's chances for nomination bad, too. This 'll queer him in the eyes of a lot of folks, and it ought to. Going? Well good-day!

"I say," Blythe added, observing Mr. Cumming's gray face with a new enlightenment. "I hope this matter isn't too personal with you. I'd be sawfully sorry. But I can say this, that it's better for a man to be found out for what he really is before it's too late. Good-day."

Duncan told Mr. Cummings the entire story beginning with his arrival from the east and his discovery of Glad's plight. The relief the latter felt in the utter exoneration of the boy from the ugly accusations of the morning showed in the sincere tears that stood in the older man's eyes as he gripped Duncan's hands.

"Thank God, Duncan. Thank God for this! I can't tell you what this means to me. What a load this takes from my mind. It seems incredable that Blythe was at the back of the plot. Blythe is a man with worldly motives and principles and your refusal of his offer and your criticisms no doubt cut him, but I can't grasp his doing anything so unprincipled, so dastardly as this. However, I am more than happy that you have cleared yourself so completely from circumstances that certainly looked the worst. The thing is now to clear yourself in the eyes of the community. As you say, you can't do so at the expense of the little girl. And I will say, Duncan," cried Mr. Cummings enthusiastically, "that I'm proud of you in this matter. Chivalry, my boy, is a virtue that's fading from the world, and fading fast. This smacks of the old kind." His face was flushed with the pride of a father. He himself was a gentlemen of the old type and the fine traditions of his southern breeding. Duncan sketched rapidly Norris' plans as far as he knew and could surmise them.

"That's all right, that's all right, if she will come through with a statement! That's all right if the Journal will print it; that and your own statement; you say you will make one?

They've,got to print it! We won't stand for a dirty low down sheet like the Searchlight coming in here and attacking the members of our first families," he added, proudly. "Duncan, I'll go up to the Journal. Let's see—Morrison, the editor, isn't there; he's in the north this summer. McWhirter has all responsibility, you say? Well, but look here, you have money in the sheet. That ought to swing it. But anyway I'll go up, I'll go up! They've got to come through, no matter what it takes. Blythe, if he's done this, will find he doesn't own the entire Riverdale press!"

CHAPTER XXX.

Molly was sitting on the edge of one of the several cots in the woman's department, by a chance vacant except for herself. She was still dishevelled from the night's fray and unwashed. Her make up and the gaudy finery of her evening dress were curiously out of place in the revealing sunlight that fell through the windows. They had the appearance of the tinsel decorations of a ball room in daylight. Her face behind the heavy streaked rouge was worn and sullen.

"Hello, Molly! Doing time for your fun last night, are you?" greeted Norris. He seated himself on the cot opposite her. "Well you gave the Searchlight the scoop on us last night. Now come through with some dope for me, that's a good girl."

The girl turned her back on him. "Aw, forget it," she said.

"Well, you don't need t be sore about it," said Norris. "By the way, I was up to Cayonsville the other day."

The girl started. "Say, you were? Did you see any of my folks?" she asked.

"Yes, I saw your dad, and he was hitting up the same old pace, apparently. And your mother, she asked about you."

"And you?" the girl asked breathlessly.

"Oh, I said you were all fine and dandy and keeping busy. You *were* busy all right last night, wern't you?" he laughed. The girl winced. "What'd you go up there for?" she asked idly.

"To see about some business. To see about a new monument for our cemetery lot, where my father and mother are buried," he added with hesitation, as though the names were not to be spoken in this presence.

"Say," the girl bent forwardly eagerly. "You didn't happen to see th' stone I had put up for my little sister Emmy, did you?"

"Why I guess maybe I did. Your lot is across the drive from ours?"

"Yes, a real nice place," the girl answered eagerly, "among the best people, and a new stone. I just got it out last week; white, with a little lamb, a little white lamb on top, and underneath, 'Emmy Wilson, Born July 5, 1907; died May 8, 1914; 'Suffer little children'.

"Seven years old, my God! it don't seem possible she was that old, it's such a *little* while ago she was a tiny baby, sleeping with me. She was the prettiest little thing with blue eyes that laughed all the time, and curly hair. I couldn't go to th' funeral. I was up at 'Frisco and sent word I was sick a bed. Oh, but I wanted to, something fierce, to see her just once more. But God, I'm glad she is dead!" she cried passionately. "She might of been like me, its so easy and she was so pretty.

"Well the stone was all right was it? Looked fine, and as good as anybody's? It ought to, I paid enough for it. Everybody robs a girl like me, even the tombstone folks. I gave the man a hundred dollars for it, and that wasn't all" Norris stared at her. For the first time compassion for her kind took hold of him as he pondered the hideous bargain, but he hurried on to the business in hand.

"Well, what was this stunt you pulled off on Cameron last night and how long is Blythe going to let you stay in here?" he asked suddenly.

"Blythe promised to get me out earl and he ain't done it," she looked resentfully at the watch on her bosom. "Blythe, Oh Lord, I forgot you was a reporter! What made you say anything about Blythe?"

"'Cause I know all about the business, all about your bargain, yours and his. Now Molly, come right through. I know all about you, you know, and there are reasons why you ought to give me this straight with no fooling round, see? What did you go into this with Blythe for? I'd suppose that you wouldn't want to get into the limelight. I'd suppose you'd be rather anxious to keep in the dark. The papers get up to Cayonsville, you know. Your name read Molly McFee in the Searchlight story but I happen to know your right one, and I might put the right one in." The girl whitened.

"Just what are you going to get out of this, anyhow?"

"Money," said the girl. "You ain't so green as to suppose I did it for nothin'."

"No, I wasn't, but still I wasn't quite ready to think you'd do such a devilish thing as this, anyway. You're pretty far gone, I know, but I thought at least you were honest. I didn't suppose you'd try to ruin the reputation of a little girl, *you*, with the sob story just now about your little sister," he added brutally. "I didn't suppose you'd be such a fool, either, as to think you could put one over on a man like Cameron that is absolutely out and out straight, that all the country *knows* is out and out straight, and that you, Molly McFee, aren't fit to black the shoes of. Now I'm giving it to you straight. The whole town's laughing at you and Blythe, today." The girl's face went a sickly yellow under its daubed paint.

"What d'ye mean?" she demanded. "Ain't he a bad one, wasn't it him that done it? Blythe said so. I believed him."

"No it wasn't, and I'll just set you right about it. Cameron and this girl are absolutely innocent. He hadn't seen her for six months before he came out here. Besides they are people that couldn't possibly be involved in such a thing,

there are some folks like that, though I suppose you couldn't understand it," he threw in cruelly.

"Yes," she cried. "Don't say that, I have some sense left anyway. I knew she was all right herself, that's what I liked the little kid for. If she'd got into trouble it wasn't her fault. But she talked a lot about him. That was before I left the candy shop. Then I heard she was in trouble. I went to see her, and met him at the gate. He said he was her brother, but I knew he lied 'cause I'd seen her brother's picture. He said she was away too, and that was a lie. So I didn't go in to see her, and after that I went to 'Frisco. When I come back I seen him here at the Non Pariel. I tried to talk to him about Glad, but he lied again, and pretended she was out of town. I found out she was here, that he was looking after her, or seemed to be. Blythe said—"

"What did Blythe say?" demanded Norris. She hesitated, then went on.

"Blythe said he was a bad one—a low-down sneak that played the gentleman and the pious act. Blythe said he'd been running down his business; talking about his cafes to folks, sayin' they were immoral and ought to be put out of business all the while he was keeping this little girl, and maybe another. He said Cameron was fooling a lot of folks, and was going to try to run for office and he wanted to show him up in his own colors."

"And you—"

"Well I *told* you," she said sullenly. "I liked the girl, and then he, Cameron, made me mad, lied to me at the gate that morning and went past me like I was dirt under his feet; like I wasn't fit to live, acted the same way in the cafes. Never'd have anything to do with me. I was *glad* to do it!"

"I see." The girl's story was following Duncan's, and his

surmises to every detail. "But you were a fool, you know. How did it come you didn't know who it was, instead of Cameron, the other man? You know him; he's of your kind—*Westmeyer*."

"*Westmeyer*!" The girl sprang to her feet, her face livid. "*Westmeyer*!" she screamed. "Say that again!"

"Sit down! Sit down, and keep quiet! Do you want to go into the tank?" She dropped down on the cot, her head in her arms, all the blasphemy known to her vile vocabulary pouring forth from her drawn lips. Norris, inured as he was to such words, shuddered.

"*Westmeyer*!" she cried at last, when the hysteria of rage was over. "That's why he took *me* away from the Inglenook. That's why he took *me* to 'Frisco and put me in the *cribs*. 'Cause he was tired of me; cause he wanted somebody else; cause he saw this girl an' wanted her. Why! I'd been living with him! He promised to marry me! I thought I'd be a regular wife!

"An' he had to cut an' leave her 'cause the cops were onto him. He dropped me at 'Frisco like I was an old cat in a sack. Went off and left me! But I got out and come back here to find him. I found him. He'd come back, I reckon, for her. He nearly killed me when he saw me." She unclasped a collar of beads and showed a cruel mark on her bare throat. "But he took me back 'cause I could be of use to him while he was hiding. He's still hiding—"

"Where?" demanded Norris.

"Oh, my God! I mustn't tell you; he'd kill me!"

"If you don't," cried Norris, "I'll print your name in the headlines as big as that placard over there, and have copies of the paper in Cayonsville by night."

His words were like hammer strokes on her bare head.

She fended them. Her face livid; her eyes desperate. "Oh, my God! my God!" she groaned.

"Besides, you've been stung! *Stung*!" he cried, "by the man that promised to marry you. Stung this week, while you thought you had him to yourself. He hasn't been hiding, oh no! He thought the officers were off the scent. He's been trying to get this girl again; found out where she lived, and went out there and intimidated her. Would have carried her off right then if he hadn't heard some one coming, and had to beat it. You'll protect this man, will you, that took you from your home and from your mother and little sister on promise of employment; ruined you on promise of marriage; and put you in a brothel while he ran after others? Come, what do you say?" cried Norris, shaking her roughly. "Will you speak or shall I—"

"Wait, wait!" cried the girl. "Let me think. You don't know what it'll mean to me, Westmeyer—Blythe! Blythe owns the baudy houses in 'Frisco that Westmeyer operates for." Norris started. "Blythe must have known Westmeyer was the man, *not* Cameron. Westmeyer is in his employ. Oh!" her voice shrilled with hatred.

"Sure, then, speak and give him away—both of 'em. Westmeyer can't hurt you; the Federal officers will pinch him before night. And Blythe—my story'll fix him! Come, will you do it? Think! Think of your home, of your little sister! You won't need to appear. The charge is a white slave one, a penitentiary offense. Oh, there is a lot to Westmeyer's credit! Come, give him away, tip him off to us, send him up and save a hundred others like little Emmy, like Glad, like yourself!"

The girl was silent. Her breast heaved convulsively. "But you—how do you know all this? What do you care?"

Norris dropped on his knees before the distraught girl.

For the time he forgot what manner of woman she was. A bright flush rose in his cheeks and spread to his temples.

"Because the girl, Westmeyer's victim, she is *mine*! She is to be my bride. Because she is beautiful and innocent in spite of her horrible experience. Oh Molly, I don't know about these things; I'm a man, and a man can't understand, but she's tried to tell me, and I've seen how she's suffered—how she starts of a sudden with an awful look of memory on her dear face. How the thing follows her day and night!

"She's tried to make me understand. When I asked her to marry me, she cried—cried terribly! Think of that! That a girl should have to cry at such a time when a man asks her for herself. She tried to tell me that she couldn't marry me. She tried to tell me what it meant not to be able to come to her husband like other women. She's tried all along not to let me care for her, but I loved her before, and I love her now. What's happened don't make any difference to me. It hasn't hurt her pure, sweet soul! But she suffers. Oh, her poor baby lips that quiver always, even when she smiles! I've vowed to God to find this man and see him punished. Molly, for God's sake, help me do it!"

Molly listened, and strange emotions moved in her breast. She had known this boy since babyhood, and his clean young life that had touched the world and its vileness at every point, yet without defilement. He was a suppliant now, at her feet—*her* feet! The feet of the defiled, of the unclean one—one from whom it would seem no human creature could have a favor to ask. Yet he was there, no longer bullying, commanding, but pleading, telling her of his love, of the anguish of his young heart as though she were another woman—a *good* woman; as though she were his mother or his sister. And she could help him! It was a new thought, that she could serve. That she, fallen and abandoned, could be of

use to this beautiful boy and the child to whom her heart had gone out because she was like her little sister. She could save *two*, give two happiness and relief; and many others, Norris had said, many others she might give escape from Westmeyer's designs. Besides, she owed it to Norris. Norris had been kind, never betraying her secret at home —the story of her ruin. Always bringing her news of her family when he came from one of his infrequent visits there.

She rose and stood with an uprightness new and impressive and jestured Norris to his feet. "What is it you want me to do? How can I help you?"

"Tell me where to find Westmeyer," he said breathlessly.

"At the corner of Filmore and M Street, in the old hotel block, in the third story, last room to the right as you go down the hall."

He wrote the directions down hurriedly. "Now for the rest! What was the arrangement you had with Blythe about this matter? What did he give you for it?"

"He gave me fifty and said if I pulled it off right he'd make it a hundred. He said I'd be run in for disturbing the peace, an' was to plead guilty. He'd have Johnny or some of 'em there to pay my fine. He said he'd see I got out by noon."

"Now tell me again, just as plain as you can, just what Blythe said about Cameron, except for the name of Glad. Don't use that. We've got to protect her, you see." He sat down on the edge of the cot and wrote rapidly. She repeated the story as told before, with surprising lucidity and calmness. When she had finished, he handed her the notes and she signed her name—the name by which she was known in the tenderloin district, "Molly McFee." He slipped the note book into his pocket and rose.

"Now then, Molly, the police court convenes at ten o'clock. If Blythe keeps his word, you'll be the first one heard, and you-

'll be out by ten-fifteen or ten-thirty. I'll be there, and after you get out I want you to go around the corner to the notary public's office—Cline, at Sixth and Washington. I'll meet you there, and I want you to make affadavit to this statement just as it stands. After that I'll look after you—give you money to get out of town or any place you want to go. I'll see that you don't lose by this." At the door he turned. The girl was still standing in the middle of the room, her hands clasped loosely, her eyes looking idly out of the window. She was very pale.

"I just want to say," he added, "in case you might take it into your head to throw me down, get cold feet or anything, that I can use this just as it stands for the paper, and I will. It's going in this afternoon."

The girl did not answer. She stood as before—preoccupied, indifferent. He closed the door, turned the key in the lock, and gained the office three steps at a time.

" 'Ju get anything?" asked the desk seargent, as he snapped the key back on his ring.

"Oh, a little." The next moment Norris was tearing down the street. He turned in at the Federal building. He found Payson and Grant, the secret service men in the office, and gave them his tip.

"Say—are you sure of this?" exclaimed Payson, eagerly, while Grant reached for his hat.

"Sure, unless the woman's lied to me about the whole thing, and she ain't. You saw that story in the *Searchlight* this morning? I caught this while I was running down dope on that; woman came through with a story—a peach of a story. Got to get back to the office with it." He was off.

The men left the building immediately. Norris was a youngster to turn such a trick when they had been using all the ingenuity of their profession in locating Westmeyer,

but the boy had given them a valuable tip before that, had made them certain the man they were looking for was still in town. He might serve them again.

CHAPTER XXXI

At the *Journal* office Norris broke in on McWhirter and Mr. Cummings in consultation. They had telephoned Duncan and he had just joined them. The boy was breathless, his cheeks were flaming, and the triumph was in his eyes.

"Well?" exclaimed McWhirter.

"Say, I've got it, and it's the biggest thing that's ever passed over the pike! It's all right, everything's all right, and we'll make Blythe wish he was in Hades before night." He threw his notes on the desk.

"What!" McWhirter seized and read them with incoherent ejaculations. "Say, what do you know about that! But we ought to have this attested before a notary public."

"Yes, I thought of that, but there wouldn't be any way to get hold of Molly in jail. Blythe's got 'em primed. I just almost didn't get at her myself. But I've arranged to be at the police court and take her across to Cline the minute she's out."

"S'pose she won't go?"

"Well, we'll have to use it that way then," urged the boy stubbornly. "Other sheets get it across that way—the *Examiner*, the *Chronicle*."

"Yes, you're right, but we've got to have the affidavit if we can get it. Now then," he thrust the notes back into Norris' hands, "go to it and be mighty quick about it!" Norris dashed for his desk, exultation seething in his veins. He was to write the story, too! He hadn't dared hope for that. He appreciated fully the situation, that, as McWhirter had said, the story needed skillful handling. He threw a sheet into the typewriter and the next moment was hammering madly.

"Oh say," he called suddenly over his shoulder, "this isn't all. I forgot to tell you, we'll get another scoop. Molly tipped off Westmeyer, her paramour. He's the white slave man wanted by the officers; they'll pinch him by noon if they have good luck."

McWhirter dropped back into his chair and gazed for a full minute at the boy. "Well, that'll do for you, my son. Too rapid an elevation in the journalistic field is as dangerous as in any other."

The news of Westmeyer's arrest was telephoned in just as McWhirter pounded back from the composing room, where he had seen Norris' story in the hands of three of the most rapid operators. It would be in time for the noon edition.

"What's that!" he wheezed, at sound of Norris' ejaculations. "Scoop number 2? Well, keep right on young man, you've got the dope on that too, I guess. Say, the rest of you boys can lay off. Go to the park and play ball today; Norris is the whole show."

The issue of the *Journal* that went down to office history as "Norris' paper," held a 144-point screamer and two two-column heads. The paper was not ordinarily sensational in its leanings, but this was an exceptional occasion. It was a chance to accomplish two good deeds—exonerate an esteemed fellow-citizen from a scurrilous and contemptible charge, and put one, in fact two, over a despised contemporary. Beneath this head, designed to strike the reader between the eyes at the first glance, were two opposing columns. First, the statement of Molly McFee, properly attested by the notary public, and second, a statement by Cameron, brief, explicit, that described the hoax by which the woman had obtained her meeting with him—the story, in fact, as told by Duncan to Norris and Mr. Cummings, but with a

skillful omission of Glad's name or any reference that might reveal her identity, or the suggestion of her first experience with the man.

Westmeyer was bound over for hearing at San Francisco. The only part of the story that gave Norris regret as the sheets of copy were turned off under his eager fingers was the fact that Molly McFee had been held by the officers as an important witness. He had promised Molly that she would not be involved further in the affair.

As an exoneration of Cameron, and an indictment of Blythe, the *Journal* story was complete, and from a newspaper standpoint comprised one of the cleverest journalistic coups that had ever been accomplished in the town. Norris was made more of than it was in the power of most youths of his age and experience to sustain with modesty. The boys of his own office generously contributed to the general praise.

Reward was not forthcoming until some weeks, but when it arrived it was of a form to sustain Norris' reputation of what McWhirter designated as a "movie hero." It was an offer from San Francisco's biggest daily. The boy's work for the secret service men that led directly to Westmeyer's arrest had been recited in the ante-rooms of the courthouse during the trial, where reporters and officers loafed and gossiped, and had drifted up to the powers in the editorial office of the big daily, where the searchlight is always active, spotting ability where it may be found.

Norris, in the delirium of his surprise, tossed a perfectly good "fiver" at a passing taxi for the service of bearing him and the news at a rate that defied all speed laws, out to Glad. He returned in a sobered and reflective mood, for after a riotous celebration of his good luck in which the household joined, Glad, at parting, bestowed one of the famed "little round kisses," and then let her small hands slide from his neck to

his shoulders as she looked up at him with a demure little maternal rebuke:

"Five dollars for a taxi, and a telephone in the house! Boy, we never *will* get married!"

His jaw dropped, and he looked at her with genuine chagrin. "Well, *what* do you know about that!"

CHAPTER XXXII

At Carmel by the Sea, Corinne basked in the enjoyment of her yearly outing, with the usual following of masculine admirers from the best society of a dozen different places. Her mother was with her, and Duncan was to join them for a few days, shortly, coming down with Mr. Cummings for a week.

On the day the Journal story set the town by the ears, Mrs. Cummings was called up by her husband on the long-distance telephone. She was so long at the receiver, and her exclamations spoke of such astonishing news that Corinne, lounging indolently on the cottage veranda, called impatiently to her.

"Well, mother, for goodness sake, hurry up and let's hear what's happened. Your 'Oh's' and 'Ah's' and 'Is it possible' are enough to give one nervous prostration"

Her mother did not respond at once. In fact she disappeared without a word into the rear of the house. Corinne started up impatiently and ran down the hall.

"Mother," she called. "Mother! Don't you hear me? I want to know who you were talking to, and what they were saying."

"Oh, your father was telling me about something annoying at home," Mrs. Cummings equivocated. "He calls up every day, you know."

"Yes, I know, but he needn't have turned me off so shortly when I answered the phone, with just a 'good morning, sister; call your mother, will you?' The chauffer's quit, I suppose, or the laundryman has lost father's favorite pajamas, or something equally thrilling, though your ejaculations sounded

as momentous as though he were announcing a national calamity."

"Well, dear, you're going on that trip in the launch today, aren't you—you and the girls? I would, because your father will be down this evening, and will be here for several days."

"Oh, is that it? Well, it's a wonder you wouldn't have told me at first, as though I didn't have any particular interest in old dad," the girl pouted. "Well, and isn't Duncan coming?" In her pout she had forgotten him temporarily.

"Not this time, I believe. He's very busy."

"Oh, fiddlestrings! Very busy! He always is busy, makes me an admirable fiance! Hasn't seen me for three weeks and now sends word he's 'too busy.' I'm glad I haven't let you announce my engagement. It shan't be announced till Duncan can come through with a little more devotion—the attentions an engaged girl is supposed to receive from her sweetheart. I'd be mortified to death if the girls knew we were engaged, and that he's left me down here alone for three weeks." She flashed out of the door impatiently. Her mother heard her with relief calling up her friends and arranging an all-day outing.

Mr. Cummings had said, "Dear, something very unfortunate has happened that involves Duncan. It's in the morning Searchlight, and I'm afraid some of the Riverdale people down there may get hold of it and show it to Corinne. She mustn't see it till I get down to explain. It's all right. Duncan is all right, but the Searchlight, from motives known to itself, has started a nasty scandal about him. Plan something that will keep Corinne away from the house and a chance to see the papers all day. I'll be down on the evening train."

Mrs. Cummings confessed an impatience similar to that of Corinne concerning Duncan. All her pride was wrapped up in the girl, their only child, and she demanded for her an

extravagant measure of adulation. Duncan had never been demonstrative in his admiration for Corinne. She did not understand the Scotch character that feels it deprecative of its deepest feelings to put them into words, and she construed his attitude toward Corinne as lack of appreciation of her. Her ambitions for their union had not until recently accorded with that of her husband.

When Duncan had come home with his newly-plucked honors and a future inviting him, more brilliant than his friends could have dreamed, the situation changed. He had improved too, wonderfully, and altogether he was quite the most promising suitor Corinne had. Her vanity, however, like that of Corinne, suffered lack by Duncan's calm and unemotional courtship, his refusal to turn aside from his business or other duties at the solicitations of Corinne. The news conveyed guardedly by her husband irritated her mind with a new reproach toward the boy. What could he have been doing—what wordly, inadvertant step could have brought upon him this surprising charge. She was impatient to know the entire story—apprehensive.

It was seven o'clock when Corinne burst into the room, aflame, a paper grasped in her hand. Friends had met the party at the wharf unable to keep the delicious tid-bit conveyed in the morning Searchlight.

"What does this mean, mother? Have you seen the Searchlight?" The girl was breathless, her heart bounding in her bosom from haste and emotion. "This is what you were talking about this morning. I know it was! Tell me, mother, this minute!"

The mother's face had gone white, and she reached for the paper. "Yes, I'm afraid it is. Let me see it."

"Oh yes, look at it! look at it!" the girl cried, thrusting the paper into her hands. "It's a beautiful thing, an admirable

picture—Duncan, our immaculate Duncan, in the limelight as a ladies' man, an irresistible fellow with many amoratas. Duncan!" she laughed scornfully. "Oh, it's too dramatic for anything—a regular moving-picture situation. The soiled dove, the wronged and revengeful woman hurling her wrathful accusations in vain against his adamant heart!"

"Hush!" said her mother. "This is awful, Corinne, really disgusting and awful."

"Awful!" mocked the girl. "I should say it is awful, if it's true. Duncan couldn't even manage his affairs of passion with smartness. I wouldn't mind a little manlike deviltry on his part, but this, to be caught in a situation like this—made the laughing stock of the town—it makes one sick!"

"You mustn't talk that way," admonished her mother. "Your father didn't want you to know anything about it till he came. He said he had the entire explanation and exoneration of Duncan.

"Oh, he did? And why don't Duncan come down and speak for himself? Ashamed, is he? Hasn't the spirit to be game!"

Mrs. Cummings sighed. She could find no words with which to restrain Corinne's insolent outpouring, she herself being impressed with much the same feelings in the matter.

Mr. Cummings, on his arrival, rebuked sternly Corinne's tirade of Duncan, with which she greeted him.

"Wait, my child, till you hear the whole matter."

"So Duncan sends you to explain for him, to apologize, to set things right with me! Oh, I got his letter this morning—three lines, I believe. 'Your father will tell you all. I'm sure you will understand and forgive me when you hear,' *et cetera*! Well, I like a man that has to have another settle his troubles for him!" She sank into a chair and gazed haughtily out the window as her father talked. He gave them the

story of the affair as told by Duncan, including Glad's history, but without identifying her.

"Now, my dear," he concluded, turning to Corinne, "I can see nothing for which you should feel such resentment," for Corinne sat unmoved. "I consider that Duncan has acted in every circumstance a most manly part—a heroic part, I may say. I'm proud of the boy, of the fine chivalry and self-sacrifice he has shown himself capable of. I'm proud to call him my son. I regret beyond words the circumstances, of course, but the statements in the paper today will constitute a complete exoneration of him in the eyes of his friends and the public, and it's likely that Blythe will 'get his' in the trial of this man. I confess, I'm amazed. He's acted the part of a dastardly scoundrel, and he deserves all he gets!"

"So Duncan has thrown up the partnership with Blythe!" exclaimed Mrs. Cummings.

"Why, certainly, my dear. As it's turned out, as Blythe's showed his hand, would you want a son-in-law of yours to be connected with him—a dealer in white slavery, an owner of the vice dens of San Francisco, to say nothing of his ability for dastardly dealing? And to think the way he talked to me today about Duncan!"

"You're sure it's true—Duncan's story? That there isn't any possibility of—," she paused, bashed at her husband's reproving face.

"Do I think there is any possibility of Duncan's not telling me the truth—of his lying to me, you ask? Really, Jane, I'm ashamed to have to make answer to such a question. I'd trust Duncan beyond any man I know. He don't know what falsehood is."

"Oh yes, you defend Duncan! You call him a paragon, and ask me to overlook his having made a fool of himself, and me,—" Corinne cried, suddenly turning with flaming

face. "Well, I'll tell you what I think he is, I think he's an unfeeling, ill-bred fellow, to have got himself in such a vulgar position—looking after a silly, half-baked girl that could take care of herself if she had a grain of sense; neglecting me and refusing even now to come down and make what little amends he could for this abominable affair. Afraid! Afraid to come! A coward, that's what he is!" Her face was scarlet, and her eyes coals of fire.

"You talk of this girl, of this consideration and thoughtfulness for her, but you don't think of *me*, how he's neglected me all this time, even since we were engaged, excused himself from his engagements, risked his reputation and my happiness for this girl who is nothing to him. *Nothing*? He'll have to show me!"

"Corinne," cried her father. "You are vulgar!"

"Well he will!" she repeated. "If she isn't anything to him but a friend why hasn't he told us of her? Why hasn't he brought her out to see us, if she is such a charming and worthy creature? Why didn't he enlist *my* interest and charity for her instead of Marlinee's? Did he explain that?" she cried.

"Yes, he explained it. He explained it in a very beautiful way—in a way that was a very beautiful compliment to you," said her father.

"Well?" Corinne waited. She was never beyond a compliment.

"He said that he had thought of doing so the first night he called after getting home, but the moment he saw you coming down the hall to meet him, all radiant and beautiful, he knew he couldn't; that it would not do; that somehow those things weren't for you. You lived beyond, above such common things—in a world of your own." He paused, with emotion. He had heard Duncan's simple and eloquent tribute

the more impressive because of his characteristic reticence, with a great happiness that his daughter could call forth such sentiment from one like Cameron, but he repeated it now with a kind of shame, in the face of the girl's uncontrolled and vulgar outburst. But Corinne was appeased. This was really more than she could have expected from Duncan.

"He said that?"

"Yes, but there was something he did not say that I think perhaps he felt without knowing it, namely, that you might not have entered with heartiness, the heartiness that Marlinee did, into his solicitude for the little girl. That you would not have understood him—his motives. Your recent words seem to affirm that."

The girl colored. "Oh, no, of course, no doubt I am not capable of rising to the appreciation of such quixotic heights as Marlinee."

"That's just it," said her father. "I don't think you are. I don't think, I haven't thought all along, that you have understood Duncan, or appreciated him, his unusual and admirable personality that causes him to stand head and shoulders above the average man. His fine ideals that he'd not relinquished if he had to die for them. Perhaps he felt instinctively that he could not bring these things to you, because you are too remote, too self-centered to give him the sympathy and understanding he would need, that a man might expect from the woman he chose for his wife."

The girl sat silent and sullen, her teeth pressing into her indrawn lip. Her father had never talked to her in such a manner before. No one had ever told her anything about herself but in terms of adulation and flattery. She resented it. She resented her father's championship of Duncan, and above all she entertained a jealousy of Marlinee and Glad that, smouldering in the past weeks, sprang up with the present

provocation into a flame that burnt in her throat. Suddenly a woman's relief came to her, she burst into tears and ran from the room.

"Father, I think you have been most unkind to Corinne, with all she has to bear," exclaimed her mother, severely. "I confess I feel a good deal as she does about this matter, and I am wholly out of sympathy with your views of Duncan's conduct. It has worked unbearable humiliation on Corinne and has spoiled his material prospects entirely."

"Oh, do you think so?" said Mr. Cummings, dryly. He lit a cigar, drew the morning paper out of his pocket and began reading. Mrs. Cummings, in disgust, joined her daughter.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Duncan resumed his duties at the office of the Grape Protective Association with outward composure, after the spectacular circumstance in which he had occupied the leading role. His friends said he carried himself uncommonly well. The affair had secured for him the popularity yielded a man who has been the victim of treacherous designs and has successfully frustrated them, but Duncan had never aspired at any time to the role of hero. He felt a deep chagrin in the knowledge that his name was on the lips of the entire town. In his own sense of humiliation, Corinne, her embarrassment, the unpleasant association that would be hers on account of their generally acknowledged relationship, increased his discomfort.

He had not gone down to Carmel with Mr. Cummings, as his impulse urged him to do, for the work of the association pressed, and he had given almost the entire day to his own interests. He promised himself, and Corinne, in the letter mailed on the same train on which her father left for the beach, that he would be down the following week.

It was well for his own peace of mind that he postponed his visit. Corinne refused to answer Duncan's letter with a single line of assurance, but by the middle of the following week the tribute Mr. Cummings had quoted from Duncan began to accomplish its work. Duncan did not wholly lack the sentiments of a lover. Also the famous copy of the Journal, that re-established Duncan's assailed character and worsted so brilliantly the assailer, was impressive. Letters came pouring in from her friends eugolizing Duncan and condemning Blythe. As Duncan's fiance (the fact was generally

understood by her friends), she found herself a sort of heroine, once removed.

A letter to Duncan toward the end of the week, with graceful excuse for neglect, reached him the day before he had planned to leave for the coast. It gave him great happiness. Corinne had chosen to let him wait for her pardon, and suffer a bit for his stupidity. It was her right. He had gone over the affair many times since, and accused himself of unresourcefulness. Corinne had reason to feel impatience, and the sweet generosity that breathed from her note touched him.

The beach outing was a golden memory for Duncan, brief as it was. Corinne was in her most ingratiating mood, and the delightful intimacy provided by the fact of his presence as a house-guest, and the many opportunities of companionship together on the beach or on the bay, or on the long tramps along the wind-swept cliffs, discovered daily to him new attractions in the woman he was assured already encompassed all womanly charms.

But under it all a certain depression lurked that claimed him when alone; a sense of a great hurt. His faith in the justification of the traffic in whose interest he was employed and toward which he was contributing his part, was shaken; a great foreboding, the need of relinquishing many things, in fact, no less than the whole fabric of his moral prejudices and convictions, shook him, as the vibrations of an earthquake are felt, that threaten catastrophe shortly, and the levelling of all things.

Duncan, at last, had met in the open, in a series of distinct engagements, the forces, the principles, the men, the *business* that reduce purity to debauchery and innocence to vice. These men and conditions should be looked after, they and all the intermediate class of evil doers. It was not the responsibility of a few, but *his* responsibility—the responsibility of

every decent and right minded man. And he had pledged himself to look to his responsibility. He pledged himself, if he got to the state legislature to do his best to eliminate the abuses connected with the liquor business, the low saloons, the dives, the illicit selling. Yet, in doing so, in doing all he had done and all he promised himself to do, would he yet be guilty? Of what? His mind shrank from the answer. Guilty of establishing in power, the very sources of these various evils; the great persuader of men towards all forms of depravity, all manner of denials of conscience and duty and sense of decency and justice. In other words—and the question rose on his mental horizon like a frightful specter—*Was not the liquor traffic from the soil and the vine up the Evil behind the evils?*"

With such a consideration tugging at his sleeve for attention, he resumed his duties at the Grape Protective Association with an utter lack of enthusiasm—an utter distaste that caused him to wish he could forget the very name of the contention that held the political field and into which he would be drawn—*must* be drawn, shortly, must as a man make one stand or the other and throw the weight of all his energies into that choice.

Even now he should be declaring himself if he desired the nomination of assemblyman. The wine men were taking it for granted that he wanted—coveted—the office. No sane young man of twenty-six could refuse such a plum. They were proceeding with the understanding that he would take the nomination and were already engaged in plans to make known his candidacy at a banquet of the wine men the coming week.

He had not the slightest doubt but that he would accept. By very inertia, by the very inability to consider the breaking away from his lifetime associations and convictions, he would

accept, but that he should find himself serving, not the cause he ought to serve, but one manipulated by and in the interests of the worst element represented therein—a party to the evil he had expected to defeat was the dark foreboding that his present reflections suggested. Eventually he did the unusual. He sought a confidant. He told Mr. Cummings his fears.

"It's not that I think the whole system and all belonging to it is rotten," he concluded. "That would mean to implicate you and me in the responsibility for conditions. But the question is—can we—can decent men control the business, and manipulate the laws to the elimination of these features and these men that are a disgrace to every one of us engaged in the industry?"

He sat moodily in his chair behind the office desk, his young eyes looking sternly before him, and afar, as though he saw the reproach he had named moving toward him, in some sad future. The arraignment of evil by youth is an impressive thing and not without its rebuke. The mind of age recalls with trepidation, under the candid gaze of those clear, unclouded eyes, the neglect, the compromises, the surrenders of which it has been guilty since the day when it, like this youth, uncovered with indignant heart, weakness, wrong, evil undreamed of, in a world which it had thought till then, wholly fair.

Mr. Cummings was a wordly man, but as such, one of the best. He had made his fortune with less capitulations than most men. Above the grade of Blythe, he was raised as high as the tree above the offal at its roots that nourished it. And that was the secret of his career, the career of the men engaged in the politer forms of the liquor business; he drew his success, his prosperity, from an unacknowledged, perhaps unrecognized wrong, beneath the surface of his business, a wrong that accomplishes not only material injustice and

material suffering, but the more subtle hurt—an assault on the man himself, on his mind and his soul.

Possibly it was this sense of arraignment and the realization of it, as he sat in the presence of the strong young man across the table from him, that urged Mr. Cummings to more than usually forceful efforts in clearing Duncan's apparently befogged brain.

"Well, boy, it's no wonder you feel as you do. You've been hit hard, and in rapid succession. It's logical that a man of your temperament and your age should feel as you do, you, who start out with all sorts of confidence in life and the motives of men, because you are young, and, in yourself, are right. It comes hard. I'm pretty far away from my own youth but, by Gad—I can understand it.

"But, because of your very temperament, a temperament—I say it to your credit—exceptionally quixotic and one that assumes responsibility early, you are peculiarly liable to some excess in your judgments—some exaggeration in your conclusions. It's easier in your young indignation to over estimate, rather than to under estimate things, the regretable things of the world. It's very easy for your mind in its feeling of revolt to conceive incorrect causes or to fail of discrimination in assigning them. You're in danger of assuming too much responsibility for others. Its an over conscientiousness that tends to the cramping of action, the restriction of growth and the possibility of the greater usefulness. Its the malady of the over sensitive mind, one that, not to give offense, provides the fanatic, the 'crank.'

"There is a middle stand one may take in all matters, one that leans neither to the one side nor to the other. In the present argument, that is the side you and I already occupy, that your father occupied before you; it is the side that claims from thinking men and women their sympathy and support.

"Of course, though, I needn't go into all this—you know it already. You are in the employ and are daily engaged in the interests of that contingent, those, I call, the Contingent of the Sane. Yet, with the recent jolts you've had from the other side of our business—the side of the Excess—its worth while fortifying your mind with the argument of our side in order that you're not thrown from sheer reaction to the side of the other excess—prohibition.

"Temperance, my boy, temperance—a noble word—is the only solution for this problem. It's the only possible stand to take. It's the only safe ground that will provide on the one hand for regulation and the elimination of abuse and on the other hand against a revolt from the threatened regimen that would curtail personal liberty, develop regulation of each man's habits to a common rule, the result of which would be a reaction to animalism.

"My boy," continued Mr. Cummings, earnestly, "you have looked upon the abuses of our business and your horror has caused you to say, 'Can any good live in this thing?' But have you recalled the good, the undeniable good that belongs to the business; the part the industry has had in the economic life of the state; the lands it has turned from useless desert to fruitful acres supporting families, industries, whole communities and great cities; the people it gives honest employment; the harmless social pleasures it provides—not in the questionable refreshment places and disreputable dives alone. Wine is there, but is it there only? Is it not a part of the best society you know, of your own home, and mine? Is it not associated, not only with regretful things, the result of weakness and wrong doing, but with every pleasant hour of social companionship you have known? Because wine was used for a little girl's downfall in the hands of a human devil,

is that wine defiled in the hands of my fair daughter, your mother, or the Christ?

"There are two uses of all human good and that good is not intrinsically changed by the hand that uses it, whether that hand be the hand of the Master or the hand of a Judas."

"Yes—that's true!" cried Duncan. He had listened as was his wont, without interruption, with the utmost concentration, "and that is just what I foresee in this case—that the hand of Judas will be the user, betraying us, the honest, the decent, the humane, to the perpetuation and establishment of a damnable business—not the exploitation of the Good we conceive our industry to be.

"Mr. Cummings, the money of Blythe and of a dozen men like him—the big interests—the interests fortified by all the departments of the liquor industry, from the lawful business of the winery to the illicit business of the dive, is going into this fight, is paying for the expenses of this very office, organized under the name of the Grape Protective Association, to enlist on the side of the Wets those whom the saloons, working in the open could not enlist. You know that—I know it. It's one of the strategies of the campaign."

"Yes," said Mr. Cummings, "it is one of the strategies, and as such, is like some of the discreditable alliances of war—a necessity demanded by the crisis. But there are justifiable rewards to this arrangement: we are enlisting hundreds of thoughtful men and women who, when added to our number, will help swing things for the right use of the good; men and women who, standing on this middle ground of temperance and discouragement of abuse, will help to make the fight against dishonorable business. They will help to establish the wine industry in the eyes of the country in the position it should occupy, that of a benefaction, a contributor to the happiness of men, to regulation of the saloon—if it is seen fit to allow it

to remain—to the place of the clean and decent institution it should and can be.

"That's the work, boy, to which you are called. I thoroughly believe that—that you, of all the young blood in this valley are fitted by your zeal, your ideals and your capacity for service, to be the leader in this great movement. I don't look for a victory by the Drys this year—it doesn't seem conceivable. But things are working that way fast, and unless the Champion comes, a man big enough, with enough pride in the industry to rid it of the abuses that are making it enemies and threatening its life, then that industry, with all its traditions and associations dear to us, will be flung out of the state with opprobrium, and with material ruin to many.

"We need, we must have your work at the state capitol, first, to help block the prohibitionist in their future efforts against us, and secondly, as I have said, to initiate the reform measures within our own circles. Don't get weak-kneed on the proposition. Don't lose faith in your friends, the vast majority of the liquor people. Don't desert those who, like yourself, have put their all, through trying years into an investment that the Drys with the destructive obsession of all fanatics are bent on destroying. *Fight* is the word, and you're a fighter if I know one when I see him!"

Duncan sat long after Mr. Cummings had gone, sunk in the review of the latter's argument; not his argument alone, but the personality of the man. His embodiment in himself of the best traditions of the liquor industry, served to infuse in him new faith, revived confidence. It was true, as Mr. Cummings had said, he was, himself, given to excess in his judgments—he was tenacious of his own convictions—perhaps erratic. It was difficult for him to hold two objects before his mental vision at once and give them impartial consideration. It had been so in this case. The vice of the

liquor traffic had stood large in his eyes, obscuring all other things, obscuring the places where liquor was drunk and enjoyed by men of guarded habits, the homes where wine was mingled with pleasurable intercourse.

Heavens! What was he about to do? To forget his allegiance to the men, the homes, the society to which he belonged? Could he acknowledge to the Enemy his people were wrong, engaged voluntarily in the work of degrading and debauching their fellow men; assign criminal intentions to all the temperate users of wine and those that made an honest living by making it? Could he class Mr. Cummings, his father, even Corinne, whose slender arm had raised a glass of good wishes to him at their parting—class them, with Blythe, and Westmeyer, and the woman? God forgive him! He had need to guard his impulses, to exercise caution in his deductions.

His work, then, was cut out for him. He reached for the 'phone and telephoned to Forbes of the Wine Association to know if the date had been set for the banquet. The sacrifice that most attested to his new resolve was that he anticipated donning a dress suit for the occasion, that must be dragged from his trunk and sent to the cleaners for pressing. A dress suit, he opined, was indispensable to a promising candidate for the legislature on the evening of his announcement speech. He had worn the dress suit but once before—on graduation night. His predilection for a "soft" shirt had won him the nickname of "the cowboy" at Yale.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Affairs were going famously with Norris. He had won his spurs, he had won a charming girl *and* he had been made an esteemed member of the Riverdale press club. The affair took place at a dinner in his honor—and that of a visiting Eastern newspaper man of note, in the "Little Red Room" of the St. George grill. Marlinee, the following morning, received hilarious rumors of the event.

"Ask Norris how he got home last night," urged Gordon.

"Ask him what he thinks of the intelligence of cabbies when a man has misplaced his address."

"Say, Norris, which will it be for a bracer, whisky straight or a little gin rickey?"

Norris, turning off rehash with nervous jabs, colored and flung over his shoulder, "Forget it!"

"Norris is young," remarked Gordon, the sporting editor, reaching for another sheet of copy which he adjusted with care in his roller, "but for one of his age, precocious. I might say *devilish* precocious! Take last night, for instance, when Berry put it to him straight whether between man and woman, he considered Scotch or Bourbon or rye the best."

His remarks were interrupted as he dodged a desk dictionary hurled by Norris after which the latter fell with new and increasing agitation upon the story of the perennial yard-fence war between the Murphys and the McGuires.

Marlinee glanced at the boy and noted his flushed face, and heavy eyelids. She had not liked the look of the boy lately, in the days since his discovered greatness. He was paying for his new popularity, she feared, paying for his success, as Fessendon, had said, as she knew only too well was the absurd and insane way of men in the world—that ability in a man

must be the sign for immediate attack on those forces of strength and manhood that make and keep him able and efficient. It was an arrangement that she considered at all times with marvel and growing disgust—disgust with the world, and with men in particular. Her recent experiences, the glimpses she had received of the work of booze, contributed to her indignation and she was in no mood for facetiousness in the matter.

"If Norris got drunk last night, I think it's a disgrace and if you fellows helped him to get drunk you've fallen about ten notches in my estimation!" she exclaimed.

The effect was what they had wanted. It was fun to "stir up" Marlinee.

"Drunk—well, no," remarked Gordon, judiciously, "I don't know as I'd put it in quite such brutal terms as that, but—politely soused, let's say—slightly incapacitated in the motor regions."

"Drunk, oh, no!" threw in Hayward. "His intellectual powers were intact—I might say, reanimated, illuminated, scintillant!" The boys roared and clapped their knees in mirth. Norris, his face scarlet, reached for his hat and bolted. Marlinee waited till the door closed after him and then exclaimed:

"Oh, you talk that way—you—Hayward! You make merry, all of you, and think you've done a fine and clever thing, getting this boy drunk, —soused—stewed—all the other cute phrases you have for your abominable work; this boy, younger by six years than any of you; new, fresh, with life just opening to him, and prospects any man might covet. You think it great sport, do you, to start him on the swift road to loss of all these things, the road Wakefield and Morton have taken—just for fun—just for your entertainment? And you are *men*, aren't you?"

The boys stared at her in chagrin, embarrassment, their

mirth gone, and Gordon raised a word of apology, but she waved it aside.

"I know you—so well!" she was speaking as though to herself. "Men, who germinate life and keep it alive in the earth! You—who talk to us women, flatter us as the bringers in of life and its preservers—without whom you would lack all grace and goodness. Yes—true—a woman may bring forth life, nourish and care for it; sacrifice and think for it, while it's yet in her bosom; bring it forth in agony; watch, tend, cherish through its beautiful babyhood and childhood and when she's brought it to the place of this one—this beautiful boy—when she's managed to keep him clean and manly and undefiled—then you men put your profane hand and smite and spoil him—spoil her fruit—her gift—that she has given her woman's soul and life for. That's what you do, you men, and I *hate* you for it!"

"Marlinee, Marlinee!" It was Hayward at her side, his face full of concern and remorse. "Don't say that! It's true—every word and awful, but we didn't mean it—we didn't think. Men don't think—really! It's just some brute something in them that pushes them to such things, into making fools and asses of themselves and others. Don't take it so seriously!"

"No, don't get sore, Marlinee!" abetted the other boys, pushing around with regretful faces. They were alarmed at the girl's emotions. Her whole being seemed aflame with an indignation that would consume her—and her words had struck home too, with truth that scorched.

"Well, then," Marlinees dropped into her chair in weakness Her lips were trembling and she feared the disgrace of tears. "Don't do it. For Heaven's sake, don't do it! Take care of Norris—you all love him, I know. Think of his mother and father in their graves out there at Cayonsville—and his

little Girl! Help him to keep straight and right for her."

"We will—trust us—we will!" chorused the boys, in repentance, They fell on their typewriters again with a vigor attesting their relief and good will.

Fessendon lounged into the newsroom. He appeared to arrive as by the power of attraction on each occasion when the subject of booze was foremost, but the newsroom had no desire to open up the subject again at the present time.

"Where's McWhirter?" he asked. "I've got some dope for him."

"Out, just this minute, I'll take it," said Gordon with eager cordiality. "Want to see him particularly? Sit down." Fessendon sat down and drew his hand over his forehead with a jesture of weariness new to him. He had gotten just back from a heavy lecture tour and the last hour had been spent on a job the least congenial of any of his duties, from the discouragements met, that of soliciting funds for the campaign. His territory was the hardest of the state. In the center of the wine grape industry—wine men and others turned him down alike. The banks that held some men favorable to the cause were tied up effectually by the liquor interests; even the churches. The Thing had some of them and their clergy tied hard and fast. It was strange to Fessendon how many excuses men could find for not looking this problem full in the face.

One of his calls had been on a young clergyman, a man committed to much the same liberal religious views as Fessendon but who carried those views farther. He was a seeker of the Ideal, the Absolute. How well Fessendon understood the spirit of the man—a mere lad. How well he remembered his own grave and determined pursuit—it is one that belongs to youth. It is a noble one and provides for the finest philsophy the world knows, but Fessendon understood the doctrine of

the Absolute that, itself, holds error, and here was a youth with his fine, young arm and his vigorous, thoughtful brain and his consecrated heart, ignoring the claims of humanity while he sought in his tomes for the philosophical place of liquor prohibition in the world's history.

It had come too soon—that was what the logic of the tomes said—before men were ready for it—educated to it. The great transformations in the mind and consciences of the world are all biological and subject to natural law. Prohibition would break into that law—disturb the fine workings of logical cause and effect. Prohibition would mean the invoking of a moral cataclysm—a thing abnormal and deterrent to the eventual object.

Fessendon listened to the lad, wording the age-old doctrine of delay—the avoidance of that interruption of the composed order of things so grateful to the philosophic mind. Fessendon understood that, too, and in no critical way. He had been a philosopher in his day—was now—but he had learned many things besides. He took time now from his pressing duties to tell the boy about it. He was fond of him and he needed him for his work.

"Yes," he said, "you are right. Nature works by laws of her own which cannot be frustrated and every thing that happens is normal—even the 'abnormal' things of life. They are all within the law—the part of the law we don't happen to see. But you talk of prohibition as something outside that law because it's revolutionary, sudden—violent, perhaps. Doesn't Nature allow for that sort of thing in her progress? Land areas are not made by erosion of the hills, alone, a process we may watch and understand. A great upheaval occurs, and a continent is made in a day. Wars—revolutions—both are historical cataclysms, but the world leaped ahead after the Reign of Terror as never before. The Christ is rejected

as a Savior by some men because he came out of time, out of the conceived order of evolution for a perfect man, yet he is saving men and women daily to near perfection.

"Oh, my boy! You are young. You are strong and the world is before you. Your opportunity is here—today—*now*! Whatever you can accomplish of good toward your fellow man is within the law of God and Nature else it could never be accomplished.

"Get busy—there are men and women and little children by the hundreds and thousands in the world today in whom the likeness of God is being destroyed by this curse—*drink*. Do we need philosophy, or science, or even religion to tell us it should be stopped? How many more men and women do we want to see take the road of those we know of every day, while we are trying to discover if the time is ripe for the banishment of this thing?

"Greed—greed alone keeps it established. Will you be a partner to it—will you give your young new strength to that which induces decay and death? My boy, forget for the time the doctrine of philosophic consistency and get into the fight."

His last encounter had been with the pastor of one of the smart churches of the city. He was shown into a richly furnished study. The entire air and furnishings of the room spoke of worldiness, luxury and self indulgence. Fessendon knew the man's church to be possessed of the same qualities, one which, professing to embody the spirit and teachings of Christ, was actuated in the motives of its people by a policy of compromise with the worldly and the material, the fruits of which were far from those of the life and service of the Master. He expected nothing from Dr. Burrington. The call was merely perfunctory and in the line of his routine activities for the

Dry campaign. He made short work of it, stating his errand briefly.

"I see," began Dr. Burrington. Well—Ahem! Really my dear Fessendon, I might make a point never to bring subjects of local agitation into the pulpit—to introduce the *concrete*. I believe that the clergyman serves the best purpose of his calling who presents the Gospel in its broadest and most comprehensive sense and leaves the individual to make the deductions—the application to conduct and choice."

"Yes," agreed Fessendon, "I see!" It *does* save a lot of thought and gives the individual a chance to do as he darn pleases." The clergyman looked shocked, but he continued:

"The teachings of the Master were given for all time and all men and circumstances. The man or woman who adopts the fundamental principles of Christianity is certain to regulate his life and choices in consistence there with."

"Yes," said Fessendon, "I've noticed. 'In God We Trust' was the motto in the house of Billy Blyther and his wife, the folks the police pinched last week for shop-lifting." The clergyman looked at Fessendon with an expression of some annoyance but he was a man of large charity and one practised in accomodating himself to others.

"No," he concluded in a 'kind—but—firm' manner. "I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I have promised myself not to introduce into my church anything that will tend to cause division or the disturbance of the very delightful spirit of harmony and fellowship that now prevails."

"You haven't disappointed me in the least, Doctor, I assure you," answered Fessendon, in the most cordial of tones as he rose from his chair. "I really wasn't expecting any assistance of any sort from you. I know that the directing forces of your church are men immediately associated with the liquor interests and I didn't expect you to be a big enough man

to break with those forces. I hope," he added fervently, taking the Doctor's hand in a grip that made the latter wince, "I surely hope, Doctor, that you'll get your accustomed raise!"

Fessendon was tired, awfully tired, physically, but there was no end of fight in him yet. That was the way he came to land, now, on Max Burgess, who, inadvertantly and unfortunately, lounged into the Journal office as Fessendon sat waiting for McWhirter.

Burgess was a type of man grown especially in the west—the professional booster—one who lives on other men's enthusiasms. Burgess lived in a blatant atmosphere of boost. The eloquent phraseology of that virtue was at his tongue's end. His services were valuable but a little forced. The business man, short in cash, who observed Burgess' breezy bulk approaching was wont to reach for his hat and conceive a sudden engagement. Moral courage was not equal to the refusing of a subscription and risking the eloquent anathemas with which Burgess was wont to favor the man who refused to "boost." Fessendon himself precipitated the matter. He found Burgess diverting.

"Well, what have you got on *your* mind today?" He asked as Burgess breezed in, and clapped him on the back with large geniality.

"Square paving—Park Square paving! We want to get that square paved and start in on those municipal dances the other towns are giving weekly to draw the Saturday night trade. Come now—come right through, Scott-Browne! I know you're public spirited, and this is going to mean more for the merchants of this town than any proposition that's been put up here for the past five years. Come on, I tell you!" Thus quoth Burgess, warming up in true booster style. Fessendon was a man and as said before no man could risk Burgess' wordy opprobrium. Besides Fessendon had an idea. He

reluctantly handed over a fifty cent piece—fifty cent pieces were not very plentiful those days with Fessendon. Burgess pocketed it with effusiveness and turned to another victim.

"Here," called Fessendon, "Wait! Suppose you subscribe now to *my* enterprise. Suppose you put down your subscription to the California Dry campaign."

"California Dry!" Burgess turned and eyed Fessendon up and down contemptuously.

"Say—what you giving us? When you talk to me, talk about a *live* proposition!"

" '*Live* proposition!' " Fessendon was on his feet on the instant. He had been likened in his lean indolence to a sleeping hound. His movement now, was like one—like a wolf-hound in fierceness and attack. The boys involuntarily pushed between the two, but Fessendon had no use for physical weapons—he had a better.

" 'Live proposition!' You talk of a 'live' proposition, and thrust your petty plea for a pavement into my face. You think you are the only men—the men that handle the dollars—other men's dollars. A 'live' proposition! Well, is there anything liv-er than that that deals with men and women and little children, with human breath in them?"

"A 'live' proposition! Is there anything liv-er than a proposition looking to conserving the strength and efficiency of men? What builds highways and railroads and conceives of factories and business? The *brains* within them. The really live thing there—their souls. And my proposition deals with *souls*!

And who conceives and brings forth the men who do these things. Women—mothers. I'm talking about *Them*! Is there anything liv-er than that? Who's going to keep the work going—who's going to do the boosting and the building of the country after you're sealed up in your fine mausoleum out

there in the cemetery? The children, the children born and unborn today. I'm talking about *them*, about them and their welfare. I'm boosting—not for a dancing pavement, or a highway, or a stocking factory, or a municipal market. I'm boosting for a town where these children can grow up with clean minds and clear eyes and strong and efficient brains and a degree of material comfort; a place where no men will prey on them if they happen to be a little weaker than their fellows. Isn't this a 'live' proposition? Well, I wonder!

"Yet, you laugh at these things—*you* who give a dozen pages in your booster pamphlets to the churches of the town and fail to mention the great and prosperous saloon business that is netting the city $5,000 annually. Why do you mention the one and not the other? Because you are cowards. You fill your pockets with the returns of the one—the thing you know hurts your town and the people in it, and the thing you hav'n't the face to boost for—and you refuse support and sympathy to the other. Oh I know you, Max Burgess, you and your kind! You sit in your clubs over your cocktails and cigars, secure in your damnable conceit. You call yourselves the rational—the *Fit*, and we who give our time and energy to these other things—the men whose business is with the things of morality and religion—you call us fanatics—cranks—creatures of vapid brain. Fools! Not to know that if you *are* Fit it is because of borrowed virtues—the virtues taught by the teachers and the preachers. You live by the benefits of other men. Even your egotism is covered by the Christian charity of your fellows!

"And the dreamers, those you despise, they have been the guardians of men's progress from the beast upward through all ages. Stomach and loins, stomach and loins, and the ape forever grins over the shoulder of the man! It is the preacher and the seer that have held him to the path and kept alive in

him the consciousness of something beyond—the sense of the farther goal.

"Yet you deprecate these forces. You call meetings to talk street lighting and new boulevards and publicity campaigns and you term the man who fails to come through with his enthusiasm and cash, 'narrow guage', the 'little man', while you fail utterly and wholly, to sense the *real things*, the things that come first—character, temperance, industry, efficiency of service—the things that most serve the material end. And to the movements and institutions in your town that foster these things, you contribute not a dollar, or an hour of your attention and co-operation!

"This is your rationality, your enterprise, the large spirit of citizenship you men boast!" His words came like whip strokes—Burgess half rose from his chair— "In God's name, who is the narrow guage', the *little* man'—Faugh!" Fessenden turned on his heel "I don't understand your kind of intelligence."

CHAPTER XXXV

Duncan awaited the banquet of the wine men with some trepidation. They would expect a speech from him. In fact, his address announcing his candidacy would lead off the after dinner speeches. The sense of the occasion was the promotion of the wine industry and it was appropriate that it should open with the name of the man who should lead the wine interests in their future efforts to secure legislation favorable to themselves and discouraging to their opponents.

Duncan was no speaker, he told himself. However, he had never failed to come through with something, when called on unexpectedly or appointed to public appearance during his college course. But to prepare and deliver a speech in his own interests! He could never remember having done anything strictly in his own interests in his life. Left alone he would never be seeking this office, now. A seat in the legislature was a thing to be coveted as a creditable accomplishment for a member of his family, but to "do politics," to button-hole this man and set up the drinks for that with a view to harvesting votes was impossible for him. If, however, by sacrificing his own feelings of reticence and modesty he could put through a needed work that would be of service to his friends and the wine industry, he was willing to pocket his own preferences, as he had done on so many other occasions, and go to it.

He did not intend to waste his time and the time of his employers thinking up fancy phrases for a long and pyrotechnic address, however. He would merely announce his candidacy, together with his intentions to serve his constituents, if elected, with conscientiousness and industry, and would close with appreciation for the confidence placed in him by the wine men that had inspired their calling for him as their represen-

tative. That would be a type of all his campaign speeches. Strictly business—no time wasted, no frills!

But, unenthusiastic as had been his contemplation of the affair and his part in it, the occasion itself provided his inspiration. No, perhaps it was his mother who suggested the real inspiration. Jeanie, never demonstrative, whose reticence and plodding habits had increased during Duncan's absence, from utter lack of companionship and diversion, during the weeks since his return, had known a strange revival. In the regard of none had he come to hold a more changed place than in the eyes of his mother. Strange had been their relations always; rather that of partners than of mother and son.

If Duncan had been aware of a lack in his father's affections, he had also known the same in regard to his mother. All of Jeanie's pride had been wrapped up in Douglas. Douglas was his father's son, the reflection of that brilliancy and grace that had surprised, and to speak accurately, eclipsed her life. Her ambitions had been centered in Douglas. The part of the younger son, the lad of ordinary parts, was to serve the boy of talents, as her's had been to devote her poor gifts to the father. She felt the incongruity of elevating Duncan to Douglas' place in her husband's ambitions, with almost the keenness of Duncan himself and, therefore, none of the sweet flattery with which a mother ordinarily surrounds her child, that lulls his own suggestions of inefficiency and inspires him with self-confidence and the power to accomplish, was Duncan's, from his mother.

What this lack meant to the backward, self-deprecative boy, none can tell, nor did he realize. Fortunately, that lack had been supplied in part by another. Marlinee, her confidence, her faith in him, her letter abounding in optimism and encouragement took the place of the letter from home that has such potential part in the life of most students. Marlinee

without knowing it—without Duncan or Jeanie knowing it—made possible the self-confidence that, by a slow development, at last met Duncan's unfolding powers and wrought, in the last year or two of his college course, the strength and vigor of his new personailty. It was Marlinee who gave to Jeanie the joy she knew when she greeted Duncan on his return.

Jeanie had never told him of the joy; it was a secret that she had hugged to herself in the strange selfishness with which people keep the dear things about others to themselves. Jeanie's secret was this: Duncan, returned, was his *father's* son.

It seemed a miracle, a thing she could not have dared pray for, but it was true. The moment he strode up the steps, he was Cameron come back; she saw it in every little detail of his new personailty: his quick, decisive ways, his swift observations and conclusions, his new readiness of speech, his new impelling masterfulness.

For this change, the rumors concerning Duncan on the lips of his friends had prepared her somewhat. Complacency had grown at every report of his Washington success and when the gossip reached her seclusion that Duncan was being named for a state office her pride knew no bounds. New honors unbelievable followed: Duncan was asked to take a partnership with Blythe. Duncan was engaged to the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in the valley and the most exclusive. As mother of such a personage Jeanie was like to be overwhelmed by her honors.

And Duncan never knew. It gave him surprise and grief that Jeanie should have felt such disappointment when he announced at last, that he could not take up with Blythe's offer. She had seemed somewhat more than usually interested, to be sure, when he first consulted her about the matter and she had urged him to go into it, but he was not prepared for her apparent concern when he abandoned the idea.

"But, mother, you wouldn't have me accept Blythe's offer, would you, under the circumstances?"

"No, no, I canna say I wud," she agreed, reluctantly, "but I'm sair grieved aboot it. Oh, no—not for mysel'—dinna think it—but frae you."

Tonight, as he was dressing, she came to his door and asked with a concern unusual, if there was anything she could do. She had laid out his clothes for him, smoothing with much awe the folds of the dress suit—*Duncan's* dress suit! It was a badge of his transformation. She looked at him as he said good-bye—something, new, worshipful and pathetic in her eyes, that moved him:

"Well, mother, wish me success for my speech." It was then her voice broke and in unaccustomed tenderness, she reached up and kissed him.

"Laddie, ye look fair like yir father! How proud he wud be o' ye th' nicht." Duncan's vision clouded and he went down the steps to his machine, unseeing. He had never dreamed of such a tribute.

CHAPTER XXXVI

It had been many years since Duncan had seen so many of his father's friends assembled in one body. It reminded him of the halcyon days of La Mesa vineyard. Cameron himself should have been there at the head of the table, master of ceremonies—Cameron with his fine, exceptional presence that impressed every one, even the man casually met; Cameron with his brilliant resources, his versatility, his eloquence, his gifts of imagery and wit that sprang to his need on the inspiration of the moment. It was true, as his mother had said: what would this occasion not have meant to his father, the occasion when his son would be honored by the greatest gift in the power of his father's friends, the leadership of their cause. A great desire arose in him to do his father credit on this rare night; to have men say of him as of his brother on that other occasion so long ago: "This is his father's son!"

He wished that he had prepared his speech more carefully, and with more elaboration. Now, in this presence, with the emotions impelled by his mother's words, the occasion took meaning—moment. Early memories stirred him, revived in him the old days, with their fine visions and expectations. He recalled the early struggles of the growers, their disappointing experiences and their yet unfufillled hopes for the success of the industry; the hopes built in the future—in his own efforts in their behalf. Great thoughts surged in him and with them almost but not quite, the keen terms, the timely phrases with which to catch and speak them. Ah—if just this once, his father's muse would breathe in him the godlike power to speak his full heart!

Another muse loosed his tongue. The banquet was long. Duncan at no time had use for banquets. He was temperate

in his inclinations and he resented at all times the imposing of gastronomic feats in the name of good fellowship. Then, too, such occasions invariably entailed the drinking of too much wine. Unfortunately, he had had more than he wanted, already. His friends knew that his candidacy would be the announcement of the evening and throughout the day he had, from custom's sake, absurd as he acknowledged it, set up the drinks many times, and received like courtesy at the hands of his numerous business friends. He had remembered, at each round that he should be saving all his fortitude in that matter till night—the occasion would tax his best control.

Already he began to feel the effect of his reluctant indulgence in the first up flickering of the lights in the back of his brain; the first illumination of the mind that tells the normal man that abnormal exhilaration is moving in his veins and that it is time to call a halt. It was as far toward excess as he had ever gone—this stage—experienced but a few times before and always from such inadvertent cause.

But, unfortunately, he was not the first speaker. A senator and one or two other notables from abroad were present. A round of toasts was called, for these. He had left his glass untouched during the courses, but there was no avoiding response to this call. He drank with the rest, cursing his ill luck. Well, he came next, at any rate, and ten minutes would put his part through. He could excuse himself on some pretext, afterward, if the thing growing bigger and more riotous in his brain got beyond his control.

Outwardly, he was absolutely calm. He looked at the hand turning with seeming negligence the slender goblet and there was not a quiver in it. His voice was firm and controlled, and the man opposite him, a new comer who had met Duncan for the first time that night, told himself, as he glanced at the strong, well-contained figure, the quiet, clean-cut face with its wide

brow, its frank eyes and firm chin, that here was a young fellow in all ways fitted to be the leader needed at this crisis.

Duncan's name was called. He heard it pronounced a long way off, from the master of ceremonies who had receded into a vast perspective. His heart bounded up as though it were trying to break from his body. The blood beat in his ears. There was absolutely nothing in his head at the moment but the bobbing lights of his brain. By sheer impulse he reached and drank off with one swallow the wine with which the waiter had just filled the glass in his hand.

He rose and looked down the far vista of scintillating lights and gleaming shirt fronts, and, in that moment, absolute composure returned. He began speaking calmly, slowly. His words were not those of the speech he had conceived, but another, a wholly different one. Words, phrases, came to his lips as he needed them, almost before the thought was formed. The thoughts were those he had conceived in the early evening—the inspiration of his mother's words, his father's remembered presence, and the thrill of this assemblage before him.

His speech was a perfect medium. It flowed like a current bearing freightage, like a thread under the needle weaving a perfect pattern; like the music record turned in a pianola; his part—merely mechanical—the medium over which it passed.

He spoke of the early days of the valley, of the yellow valley as he remembered it, first, a child of five or six. He spoke of the coming of the pioneers—his father, the men gathered there about this board; of the brilliant promise of the golden land, of their fine plans and hopes, of the great vineyard commonwealth growing swiftly under their hands; the land that once barren, presently smiled with green vineyards, acres and acres, as far as the eye could reach, vineyard row after vineyard row,

wheeling into vision as the trains of the new railroads brought the people flocking to the country.

He spoke of the struggles of the growers; of conditions that worked hardship; of the great hand to hand struggle of the shipping agencies in their throat cutting competition, of the present armistice of the interests and the realization of the contending forces that the life of the industry lay only in co-operation.

He pictured the enemies of the wine business—the prohibitionists—with their slanderous accusations of growers and wine makers, and their campaign designed against the existence of the liquor business. His hearers waited on his words breathlessly.

And here he made sudden digression and in rising earnestness pictured the evils within the business that furnished argument for the enemy. He left no unworthy feature untouched—lawlessness, carousal, the despoiling of homes by the selling to men given to excess, the corruption of justice, gambling, immorality. His words stung. He spoke in fierce arraignment of men in high places who combined with honest business, the vicious.

He turned suddenly, with apology for introducing the personal, with emotion expressing his deep appreciation to his friends, for their sympathy and loyalty in the recent attack upon himself. He accepted that loyalty, he added, not wholly as a tribute to himself, but more as the generosity of men to his father's son.

He spoke of his father in voice of thrilling tenderness; recalled the old days; with happy phrase and ingenious imagery invoked the presence of the elder Douglas. He was there at that very table in the midst of his friends tonight—his old friends! His presence with its grace and charm was beside them, his voice with the old cordial ring was in their ears—his face with

its irresistible smile sunned them. They bent forward across the table, with eager faces, as though the thing were reality; with eyes filled with old loyalty, while sighs, and a man's deep sob broke on the silence of the speaker's periods. They had loved Cameron.

He spoke of his brother, and, suddenly, the boy Douglas was there in their midst, in the person of the other boy, Duncan, the same flashing eye, the hair swept back proudly from the forehead, the cheeks spotted with regal color.

He closed suddenly and briefly, shaken by his own emotions: in the name of that beloved father and perished brother; in the name of the new loyalty he owed his father's friends, in the name of the great and noble industry they all had labored to foster he pledged his heart and hand's best service.

Duncan took his seat. It had been a great speech. It took his hearers long to get their breath. A full minute was ticked off audibly by the great clock on the wall before the applause burst forth—such applause as had not been raised there before. Men reached to grip Duncan's hands; men sprang from their seats with their congratulations, and the toast was raised high and clamorously.

"His father, from the ground up! "

"Why as he spoke I lost him and Cameron was there," said one.

"His father, with the same prod for his imagination!" whispered another of the diners, meaningly. "Well, some men have to have that. It accomplishes the needed inhibition—knocks out self-consciousness and loosens up eloquence."

"Yes?" answered the man at his side. It was Doctor Elliot His eyes followed his companions glance with a concern effectively covered by his professional command. Duncan was drooping forward in his chair, his elbows on the table, one hand raised to the waiter for another glass. The light and glow had

gone out of him. He smiled mechanically at the men crowding about him. He looked like a man exhausted.

He sat through the seemingly endless address of the next speaker. Then he turned to the men at either side and excusing himself started to leave the table. The room was swaying dizzily about him, he groped for the backs of the chairs to guide his steps and a waiter glided noiselessly and subserviently to his side and offered him his arm. At that moment his name was called in the stentorian voice of a hotel page.

"Duncan Cameron is wanted at once at La Mesa vineyard! Is Doctor Elliot here? He is also wanted, instantly!"

The sound passed through Duncan like an electric shock. His first thought was of his mother, and he was instantly sober. He plunged out into the lobby into the crowd gathered there about a boy from the vineyard, his chauffeur. The latter, hatless and breathless, with white face, was leaning against the desk. He started at Duncan's appearance and swallowed, unable to speak. Duncan shook him fiercely:

"What is it?"

"Oh—something awful—Morton—his wife—come quick!" With a cry Duncan darted past him to the waiting machine, the Doctor at his heels. The boy sprang in after, but Duncan was at the wheel; he threw in the clutch and the machine sprang forward with a bound.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Affairs with Morton had been growing rapidly worse since his discharge. The notoriety lent him by Antonio's trial had worked him hardship. He had lost his standing with his friends of the business world. Even those who would have condoned infraction of the law that made it illegal to buy wine from the wineries for retail in dry territories, found it to their interests to treat with coolness the offender, now that his offense had been given unpleasant publicity. There was no work to be found by Morton around Riverdale. His pride would not allow him to descend from the position of manager of one of the largest vineyards of the state, and an enviable business standing to that of mere day laborer.

He went to Lodi, to Stockton, into the Sacramento valley, looking for a managership, or clerkship, but all such positions were filled and the waiting list overcrowded. Duncan's grim justice would not permit him to write Morton a recommendation. For Elsie's sake, however, he went to the stores and secured an extension of credit with promise to settle their accounts himself if there was no money forthcoming from Morton, and he insisted upon Elsie's occupying the manager's cottage through the summer or until Morton was settled with a job some where.

Elsie remained, her growing concern for her husband and little brood admonished her to retain the friends she had and lent a foreboding that she would need them even more in the future than now. She had hoped that his excursion after work, away from his old associations and drinking companions would give him an opportunity to brace up and get hold of himself, but the weakness at which the alcohol poison had struck seemed to be a vital one, provided by a nervous pre-

disposition to excess. He had always played to excess, worked to excess, carried any enthusiasm he might adopt to a point beyond the normal. His temperament, fitted to accomplish, to accomplish even brilliantly, certain to obtain success in anything he might take up within the limit of his natural ability, was also just the kind of temperament to provide a victim to the alcohol habit and one with whom the work of degeneracy, moral and physical, would be quick. The latter work was already accomplished and Morton was a physical wreck. The outward signs of excess, so apparent to the experienced eye, turned him away with a refusal from more positions than he knew.

Morton returned from his latest trip in search of work in a more alarming condition than Elsie had ever seen him before, one that spoke desperation. He had evidently known no cessation of drink since he had left. The hideous temptation had met him at every turn, beckoned in every town he went, invited at every street, breathed across his face from the mouths of men—turned and, just as his will, with a desperate revival of strength had cried, "I won't," laid hold on him with its iron hand and a leer that said, "Oh, yes you will, you know, for you are *mine*!" and the shuddering ego in the man bowed its submission and followed.

Morton was morose, uncommunicative, sat, while at home, for hours without a word, his head in his hands, his eyes staring sullenly before him. He was frequently away and returned in the early hours of the morning or not at all till the next night. Elsie shuddered at thought of his return. Her night hours, while she sat and waited for him, or tossed in suspense on her bed, dreading the sound of his unsteady steps were full of the anguish that only those who have lived with the same terror know. She wondered with tortured mind what manner of child would be the one that slept in her bosom, what

hideous inheritance of weakness and evil it knew, conceived by a drunkard and carried by a mother whose daily thought impressed its subconscious mind with such dread. She prayed piteously that the curse might pass from it. She prayed desperately for her children, that the frightful greed that hunts on the highways of the land and in the streets of the city and in the places where men meet for legitimate comradeship and pleasure—where they must go to press the business of life—might not lay hold on her beautiful boys.

She thought with a frightful dread of the future, of the future in which that threat would live and pursue, though she might raise them strong, and see them established in soberness and industry.

How it would wait for them at that hour—God knew when—when accident, or infirmity or undiscovered weakness or the need at a crucial moment would cause them to turn to Its embrace—The Terrible One—from whose arms, the fever of whose breath they should never more be freed, till life had gone out in a last gasp of despair and remorse. So Elsie thought, sitting day by day, sewing on her baby clothes, with her heart a dead thing within her and her brain a nest of living dread!

Morton had been away for two days. She could not locate him. He had said when he left that he would be back that night, be at the Fair Association headquarters the greater part of the day—Grant, president of the Association, had promised him a day of auditing the books. He would not be out till late. There was little need of that postscript. She never looked for him early.

He did not come that night nor the next day, nor the next night. She had called up at the Fair Association office. They had not seen him. He was to have been there. They had given him a day's work; possibly more. He had seemed glad to have the job.

Elsie's heart was sick. She knew the reason why Morton had not shown up. The family would not even have his wages for the one day. They needed it. She had called up many places where she thought he might be. At her request, Duncan had searched through the various saloons where he thought Morton might be found. They were no longer those of the plate glass character.

The man who begins as a social drinker and finds himself presently in the gutter has, in his descent, fallen through several strata of society, and at the last it is the dive down by the tracks, or across in the tenderloin that receives the finished work. It is the low saloon—the hell holes of the red light—that get the pickings from the palaces on Broadway and Commercial street. With a vast righteousness the Palace bar refuses to quench with more drink the fires it has started in the maddened throats of men. The low saloon may have him, then, if it will be so inhuman as to prey on visible weakness.

And the low saloon receives him. But by a strange circumstance the pennies handed across the bar of the dive by the shaking hand of the man in the last grip of alcohol poisoning, find a place side by side with the gold pieces the smart patrons toss carelessly to the cashier of the Palace. The strong box of the Palace and the dive are the same.

And Duncan acknowledged this as true, in some cases, in such cases as Blythe, and others, but not with all. And not much longer. He was thrilled with the zest for a fight—a fight that would put the greedy man, the man of unscrupulous ambitions out of business, and exalt the industry of the sound man the humane man—the man who would sell pure goods to temperate men, at sane hours in a safe and respectable place. He commended the Palace saloon for its respectability—for the clean and sanitary and attractive and wholesome environment it supplied for its patrons.

He commended the Palace saloon's humanity for refusing drink to Morton and his kind. He condemned, in all the terms he knew, the saloon that would receive Morton's infrequently earned dimes and send him home to abuse Elsie and the children. But what he intended to do with Morton and his kind—at the stage the Palace saloon found it had no farther use for them—just what he meant to do with them he hadn't considered. It is the point at which a great many pause in their reform of the saloon.

Duncan did not find Morton. But Morton came home. On the third night at midnight, Elsie, waking from a sleep of sheer exhaustion into which she had fallen, heard his footsteps. She hurried out into the hall, the nervous fear that always clutched her now-a-days turning her cold and shivering. She wished now that she had accepted Jeanie's offer to stay with her till Morton returned, but she had never failed Morton. She hung a desperate hope on that fact. Somehow she felt that the day she went away and closed the door against him, the day he should return and find no light or presence at home, would be the day she lost him forever.

Besides, Morton usually returned home sober, at least from any prolonged sprees. It was when he was working up to a season of excess that he was—she had not yet called it "dangerous." She had let the children remain with Jeanie for tonight as she frequently did. She was glad.

He was at the door. He had come home on the night trolley that passed the end of the vineyard. He had drawn his day's wages in advance on excuse of a bill that needed paying and had doubled it, tripled it, a half dozen times in a remarkable streak of luck at poker in the rooms of the Golden West bar across the tracks. He had gone no farther for three days than the bar in front. The Golden West had managed to return every cent Morton had won to the till from whence it came.

For three days Morton had lived on poison. From the Golden West, when his money was gone he made his way to a bar up town—the second stratum up—but the bar of the second stratum up, while not, itself, lacking in hospitality to any man who might have the price of a beer had recently received a hard jolt at the hands of a newly appointed and zealous officer for selling to individuals bearing Morton's earmarks. And beside, Morton had not the price. The bar-keep, however, gave him the news that he was wanted, that his wife had had Cameron calling up all the saloons in town to locate him.

"Cameron!" The word acted like fire in the veins of the man already mad with the need of another drink. The bar-keeper for the sake of old times stretched his conscience and gave Morton that drink. It was a small one but it was all that he could do for him. He took him out to the corner and put him on the suburban car. The drink brought him temporary relief. Morton slept on the way out and when he had been helped off the car by the conductor—a friendly man, who knew Elsie and pitied her—he wove his way with difficulty homeward. But at the door of his home, with Elsie coming down the hall toward him, her scared and haggard face lighted by the low gleam of the night lamp, the flame of his rage and thirst broke out within him. She was slow in opening the door and he beat viciously upon it. When she had opened it and he reeled in, she fell back in a fear that enraged him. Why did she look that way at him? Why had she sent Cameron, crying the whole town over for him—Cameron, the man that had ruined him, he demanded hoarsely, his rage clearing his tongue.

"Harry, be quiet! You'll wake the neighbors. Come in—let me get something to eat for you. You are tired, sick."

"No," he cried, "Answer me—why did you send that cur after me?"

"You were gone so long, dear, and I was worried—I was afraid," she said soothingly.

"Afraid, afraid of your husband? That's a nice way to talk. Afraid—you're afraid are you? You look at me as if I'd hurt you—kill you."

"Why—no, not that!" she shuddered.

"You do. You are always looking at me as though I was something awful, something you couldn't stand; something too far gone for anything! You look at me, always, out of your big eyes, and you send some one after me when I go away, as though I were a baby—as though I didn't know what I was doing—as though I couldn't take care of myself." He had come near her and was glaring into her face in a frenzy of rage. "I'll teach you to spy on me, to send that sneak after me," he seized her arm—"I'll teach you!" He struck her full in the face with his open hand. She staggered back, groping for the wall, her hand going to her face in a daze of horror.

"Harry!" Her tone maddened him:

"Shut up! Shut up, I say. Don't cry! Don't you dare cry when I strike you. Not a whimper—I won't have it!"

"But Harry—oh, Harry—you *struck* me! Oh my God, you struck me!" Her face went down on her arm with a shuddering cry. He seized her, whirled her half around and glared savagely into her dazed face.

"If you yell like that again I'll kill you! Ah, I know you—I know you'd have folks think I was all in. That I was clean gone—a drunken sot—that's what you want them to think! That's what you sent Cameron for, to tell everybody he saw that I was off my nut—gone—down and out and no good."

"Harry—no!" she cried. "Not that. You don't understand. You're not in a condition to understand."

"There it goes again—'not in a condition!' Ah—its a fine

wife that talks that way to her husband. You're a faithful wife, you are, yes—but—how do I know! How do I *know* that you are! You're right—I'm away too much."

"Harry! you shan't talk that way. I can't live and let you talk that way!"

Well—how do I know you *ought* to live?"—he seized her arm, dragging her to him and staring into her eyes with a searching face. "How do I know?" her blood froze at the look. She struggled with all her strength to get away, but he held her, pushing her slowly backward and to her knees, his eyes on her face.

"Harry!" she cried, her strength going. "Harry! You won't kill me will you? You won't kill me—and the little baby!"

"Maybe I ought to. Maybe I ought to!" She flung herself upon him as he held her, threw her arms about his knees, clung to him, called him by the tender names she used to have for him before she had lost heart for such terms.

"Harry, dear Harry! Look at me. You forget who I am. It's I, Elsie—your wife—who loves you! Remember—oh, remember how happy we were that night when you took me. You were so proud and bonnie! And we walked home, Harry, under the tall trees. The moon was very high and it shone on the roof of our little house—yours and mine. And don't you remember—dear—when the first baby came? He was so little—oh, his dear little toes!" she laughed hysterically. "And the next little baby girl. Harry! We both wanted a girl. And she died." She was speaking calmer now, as she felt his tense body relax and his hands tremble and lose their grip. She had gained her feet, her arms still embracing him.

"And then another boy with blue eyes—just like yours, sweetheart!" She kissed his eyelids, dropping over his sullen eyes. His hands had dropped from her shoulders and he

leaned against the wall dazedly. This was what she had foreseen—*madness*. But she had won him from himself this time—perhaps for all time. She was thrilled with a great joy.

"And dear, *this one*, this little one!" She stretched her arms with a comprehensive jesture.

"*Harry*!"

The word was a scream. He had seized her, pushing her to her knees, again, his hands on her throat.

"That's it, that's it! I'd forgotten. That's why you ought to die." His hands closed on her throat but relaxed.

"No—not that way!" he panted. "You'll look at me—you—you'll look at me from your big eyes. Wait!" He reached into his breast, holding her with one iron hand. She knew. Her head went back, her hands clasped the arm that held her. It came to her that "little baby" would never know—neither this, nor the tragedy of his own life. A great peace took her and she smiled as she fell.

He saw her face through the smoke. The blue eyes looked at him still and with a terrible cry he turned the pistol to his own breast and fell beside her.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

It was twelve miles to the vineyard. The men reached it in fifteen minutes. They turned in past the family home, the lights of the house flashing by like a shot. The machine ground to a standstill outside Morton's house, beyond, with a shock that threw the occupants from their seats. Duncan's neighbors closed about it silently with blanched faces.

"Where are they?" he asked, with parched lips.

They waved him without words to the hallway. Duncan and the Doctor passed up the steps with hats off, the crowd closing silently behind. In the hall, in the rear, just in front of the door, they came upon them. There had been no need for the doctor's services—he had been sent for in the first panic. The bodies had not been moved from where they fell: Elsie's and Morton's—Elsie's lying face upward, a curious smile upon it, Morton's fallen across her, his head under him, the pistol still clutched in his hand.

A tragedy such as enacted on La Mesa Vineyard, shocking in its effect on all connected with it, must at all times fall most prostratingly on that mind in which dwells a sense of responsibility for the catastrophe, even the faintest. Such was the shaft that felled Duncan. Grief, horror, these would not have served to loose to such an extent his practiced self-control, but the reproach of Morton, of Elsie, almost the last words he could remember from her—this fell upon his horrified senses as he looked upon the tragedy, the culminating blight.

With a face like a dead man, Duncan assumed control of the situation. He cleared the house of the staring throng, he called the undertaker, he made temporary disposition of the bodies after the official formalities were over. From his chauffeur he had learned that Elsie's children were with his mother,

One of his first acts had been to call her up and assure himself of her condition and the care of the innocent orphans. His mother's tones over the telephone betrayed the shock she had undergone but she was a woman of self control. Duncan had drawn from her his own resourcefulness and quiet in time of crisis.

He did all things swiftly, silently, a hundred things that appeared to be done in the next few days, during that somber and never to be forgotten time of death, the time when the mortal, unavailing tokens of the vanished, are abandoned to their place. He did all things, moving with quickness and decision, his physical and mental powers made to serve his will the while within him he knew the burden of an insupportable weight; something that dragged upon him till he was near to fainting, to falling; the consciousness of his own part in the unspeakable catastrophe.

It never left him. In the moment his mind crowded with concerns for the living and work for the dead loosed one instant its preoccupations, remorse gripped him and his brain writhed in its agony as in a physical spasm. Morton! Elsie! Their little children! With tragic precociousness they demanded daily what he had done with their papa and mama. Had the officers come and taken them away to prison, like they did little Carlos's papa? Was that why they were brought over and left all night at "grandma's" so that the wicked "cops" could come and carry Daddy and Marmie off?

Duncan thought he had been a witness of human grief. He thought his mind had suffered in the revelations of Glad's calamity, in Amanda's grief, before, in that hour when Douglas' young body had been given into his father's arms, in his father's death. He thought he had sounded all the poignant forms of grief, but he had never imagined for himself such anguish as he knew in the definace of these babies demanding father—

mother—those priceless possessions that drink had snatched from them in hideous tragedy.

Drink! God—*drink*! Drink made of the fruit of his own vineyard—why not? Or some one's else vineyard. Wine—*harmless* wine, social wine; the temperance drink, the drink that brings no excess, that tends to sobriety, to health, to happiness! Wine, to be drunk at the bar and at the clubs and in the homes; to be exploited among men who have not known its use; among the women, the mothers and the sisters, among the boys and girls; among the little children; to be infused in the veins of children unborn! *Wine*—for the sake of the industry; for the sake of the men and women who want to earn a living thereby; who want an income—a handsome income, fine houses, luxurious clothes, automobiles, college courses, European trips! *Wine*—that must be consumed that the business may live! *Wine*—the polite way by which men take their first step toward death!

His mind encompassed many things: he thought of the speech he had made, championing this very thing, and of the effect—the very visible effect on his audience. The paper had pronounced it one of the most eloquent in the history of the town; had recalled Cameron and spoken of the deep impression made on the wine men by the young man who in all ways promised to be the brilliant leader and public man his well remembered and esteemed father had been.

Duncan recalled his success with something like physical nausea. And it had all been induced by wine, his eloquence even, the spirit that took him out of himself and conveyed him to undreamed heights. In other words, he was drunk. It was drink entering in and possessing him and using him as a mouth piece to word its specious arguments. Once before it had laid hold on him, covertly, without his knowing its designs: that night at Corinne's. And it had made a beast of him,

in one moment had struck from the throne of his being, his regal self, his decent and purity-loving ego, and loosed something, within him of which he had not known himself possessed, breathing abominable desire toward the woman he loved. This was its proper work then—to revive the hardly vanquished beast in a man and with it the impulse of lust and slaughter.

Yet it had its politic means. It not only dashed off the locks behind which man's lowest being is held safe by his conscious and civilized self, but it catered to that same self, whispered into the sane mind its persuasions. The plausibility of its service: "Men are not always their best, at the fullest of their powers, when they most need them; the physical fails by accident or weakness, or the result of some sustained strain. *Here* is an ally—stimulus for the hour—for crucial moment, and no harm done."

He shuddered. With perfect understanding and compassion he saw now the way Middleson and Wakefield and Toland had gone—how Hayward and Hattery were going, and a dozen others he knew. How *he* would have gone inevitably should he follow the course he began the other night—the course of public life and the necessity to keep up and hold his own. He had set his mark in his first speech—it was by the prod of wine that he had accomplished his first brilliant success. Wine provided the match that united emotion with the power of expression. He would have sought it again, often, *always*, for beside the temptation provided by its serviceability there was the inherited weakness for it.

"God! Was there any doubt but that what Morton had said of his father was true—that the drink at the last, had possessed him? Yes, and was it not before, long before, that the thing began; when he was a youth, like himself, and in the same way—drink, a prod to his natural resources the availibility of which his erratic temperament made uncertain?

And this was the explanation of that genius that flamed up on the moment, in the hour of conviviality and fellowship into a dazzling thing, and left him exhausted and over wrought for a day. Thus the explanation of that growing disability, the gradual loosening of his hold on practical affairs; the unrest, the impatience, the harshness later with Jeanie and himself, strive as they might to please him.

Certainly he had known that some of it was provided by too much use of stimulants but he and Jeanie had carried it all with a great charity, a great ignorance. If it were excess it was the result of his bereavement, of the shocked and ravished love of his great heart. They had never questioned his course, never reproached by word or look, never tried to dissuade him from his determined course, had allowed themselves to see and think nothing. Ah, what blindness, what mistaken devotion!

He sought Dr. Elliot's office on appointment. And sat waiting for him with a gray and stricken face.

"Doctor," he asked at once, "I came to ask you about something and I want the truth. What did my father die of, what was the real cause?" The doctor studied him for a moment, Duncan looked like a man to be answered.

"Your father died of alcohol poisoning, occasioned by long social use of drink, mostly wine, hastened by excess in his last years. His death followed an unusual indulgence. It caused rupture of the already enlarged blood vessels of the heart and induced hemorrhage." Duncan sat silent for a long moment, then he reached for his hat: "Thank you," he said. But at the door he wheeled:

"In God's name, doctor, why didn't you tell me, why didn't you let me know before! Why didn't you warn me months, years, before my father died, when he first began to go that way? I might have done something to prevent it. I might

have done something, *many* things, since. Do you think if I'd known that I would have kept on providing the stuff that killed my father, one of the finest, one of the strongest? My God, doctor! What did you mean?" For once, in what, in the eyes of most men would have been called an unusually conscientious career, Dr. Elliot's face flushed and his eyes showed chagrin, shame.

"God knows Duncan, it's the way of our profession to cover up, to make it easy for the family. I tried myself, believe that, my boy, to make your father see, and understand reason, but he was too far gone. It was a part of his social habits first, and then when the chemical need came it was too late. He didn't want you to know, your mother did not want you to know. They made me promise."

Duncan hung his head, he went slowly out. Something vital in his conception of his father and mother that made up his life, slipped from his heart and away forever.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Duncan was absent from his duties at the Grape Protective Association a week. When he returned he walked into the president's office and laid his resignation on the latter's desk. Mr. Whitten looked at him inquiringly, then opened and read it.

"What's this for?" he asked abruptly.

"What's it for?" asked Duncan, hoarsely. A great indignation seized him. "You haven't heard of the tragedy on my place?"

"Why yes, very terrible, very regretable. But really I don't see what that has to do with it."

"You don't?" Duncan choked. Words failed him in his utter indignation. Was it impossible that this man could face it out, make pretense of ignorance of any possible connection between his business, his and Whitten's, and this hideous catastrophe? Excuse, he might, argue he would, naturally, Duncan could not have hoped that the case would lie as plain in all men's eyes as in his own, but this was heartless.

"I can't talk about it now," he cried. "I'll tell you my mind soon, tonight, at the meeting called in the interests of the campaign." He turned and walked out.

It was the first meeting of the wine men called to complete plans for the summer's fight, the campaign of the Wets against the Dry amendment. It would include practically all of those present on the night of the banquet, and more. Duncan was scheduled for the leading talk. His recent announcement and the work he had already done as secretary of the local protective association fitted him to be the most effective and popular speaker. His mind, working along the simplest lines of deduction, told him that his first responsibility was

to undo his arguments of the banquet night. It was the only course to take, to convey to all his new knowledge, the new light that had dawned on him on that fearful morning, gleaming across the prostrate bodies of his friends.

He sought the place in the evening. It was the banquet room of the same hotel in which the first meeting was held. As he entered the memories of the night one week before were so vivid as to almost overwhelm him. The week had left its mark on him; he looked old, worn. But he walked with a grim determination, his shoulders squared. An incident of the afternoon had roused every ounce of fight in him. Whitten and Powell, the latter the chairman of the program committee for the evening, had met him as he was coming out of the St. George grill and asked for a word with him. They stepped into an ante-room off the lobby and sat down.

"Well Cameron, Whitten here tells me you have changed face on the liquor question and are about to throw your friends down, that you expect to speak on the subject tonight instead of the talk we'd expected from you." Duncan looked across at Whitten squarely for a full moment, contempt in his gaze.

"Yes," he said, "that's true.'

"Well, say," remarked Powell, "I guess you'd better not. I guess you'd better just cut it out. I haven't any argument with you about your stand; I suppose you conceive it to be right, but there's no need of making a fuss about it. You have your own convictions and you're willing to allow us ours, I suppose. We'll just cancel that talk of yours tonight."

"You will? answered Duncan. "Well, you *won't*. I'm scheduled to talk at the meeting tonight. I'm announced candidate for assemblyman and this meeting is called for introducing my views to the rest of the wine men, it's my meeting. I intend to talk."

The two men stared at him. He sat back in his chair motion-

less. Not a muscle of him twitched, his face was absolutely composed but his words bit like a steel clip and his clenched fist, lying out on the table, raised the great muscles in his arm to his bared elbow. They reached for their hats with some embarrassment and sidled toward the door.

"All right, just as you say," said Powell, "but I think you'd better reconsider the matter." As the door closed behind them Duncan reached for the telephone. He got Mr. Cummings on the line. Mr. Cummings had been out of town since the day after the tragedy and he had not been able to see him.

"Mr. Cummings?"

"Yes."

"This is Duncan. Mr. Cummings, you are chairman of the campaign committee of our association, the Grape Growers Protective Association?"

"Why of course, yes."

"I am the main speaker tonight, you know. The meeting was called in order for me to repeat my announcement of the other night and outline a plan of campaign for fighting the Drys. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, certainly!"

"Mr. Cummings, I have changed front on this question. Since the tragedy, the unspeakable tragedy on my vineyard, I have seen a new light, the real face of this problem. I wrote you a line at Sacramento indicating that, saying I wanted to see and talk the matter over with you when you returned. Maybe you didn't get it. I want to talk to you, I want to talk to all my friends whom I yet love, esteem; my change of heart has made no difference in that way. I want to talk to them, tell them what I feel and how I came to feel it, convince them that I am right. I want, like a man, to come before

them in their own circle, not public, and make my stand, then step down and out of the business forever."

"Duncan!"

"Yes, that's it. But they're trying to prevent me. Some of them, Whitten and Powell, were in here just now and said they guessed I'd better call my speech off, they'd cancel the talk, etc. By God! If I had ever had my doubts about the integrity of this business it's now when these men I've trusted as conscientious, honest men, my friends, deny me the privilege of taking a frank stand, an honest say in the matter in their councils behind the closed doors of their meeting. Will you stand for it, Mr. Cummings, or will you, with the authority that's yours, say I shall have a chance to have my word?"

"My boy, this is all so new, so amazing, so overwhelming! I wish I could see you, talk to you before night. But I can't, I'm leaving just now for Lodi and won't be back till just in time for the meeting. Whitten, Powell, you say? Why no, they have no such authority if you want to speak, if you're determined to speak. You're booked and they can't cancel it without your request or my permission. I'll see to that.

"But Duncan, boy, have a care! Think what this means. Think what an irretrievable step it involves—your whole career, your life prospects. Duncan, do you know what you're talking about?" The older man's voice came brokenly.

"Mr. Cummings, I know what I'm talking about. I realize every thing. Good-bye and thank you." He hung up the phone.

CHAPTER XL.

Duncan took his stand on the platform in a deadly silence and looked about him on the audience of his friends. He was absolutely composed. He began calmly, slowly, almost colorlessly:

"I have looked, since I last addressed you, on a tragedy, a tragedy in which a man killed his wife and unborn child. The man was drunk. The man and woman were my friends. They were two, designed by nature, to have lived long in health and happiness and fruitfulness. They leave two little sons and a daughter to want parents' care throughout life and to hold in memory, as their heritage, this hideous tragedy.

"Some people would say I had no part in this tragedy. I had. It was in my house that the father and husband took his first glass. Before that he had not known what drink was. He learned at my father's table. In my house we gave him two gifts, wine and his wife, the one, later, to slay the other.

"Before this man came to my house, before he took his first glass of wine he was a man of physical perfection; he was a man absolutely moral, he was a man with a creditable amount of mentality. He loved his wife as the best man among you loves his. I saw his eyes when he kissed her, a bride in her orange blossoms in my father's house. I was only a boy, but I remember his eyes when he kissed her and I knew in that moment that he loved her.

"That was ten years ago. For some years, many years, wine did not take hold on him to any visible effect. During that time he had worked hard and saved. He had a little orchard ranch of his own that he worked, or hired worked. He had become my foreman and he gave me the best service he knew.

Children had come, two little boys and a little girl. They were very happy, he and his little family.

"Then the time came when the poison in the wine—that you and I *know* is in wine, in the purest we sell—began to have its effect. It was at the time when he was run down, tired, worn in mind and body from his work in my service. At that time I was away and the social end of my business fell on him, the responsibility of mingling with men, with my friends and business acquaintances, with you, here tonight. It is the custom among you, among us, to show our good-will and friendship for each other with drink, the treats, beer and wine, taken in friendly fashion at the bar. It was what he was called on to do as my representative, to show he was one among you. The thing began to tell. From a man of physical perfection he became a physical wreck. From a man of mentality he became a mental wreck. From a man of unimpeachable character he became a man whose morals were undermined, a drunkard, a carouser. From a man of industry and a promising material future he became a loafer and gambler who impoverished his family by his vicious habits. From a man who loved his wife and was kind and generous in his home, he became abusive, cruel, neglectful.

"From all the splendid promise of his young life, at twenty-six, just my age, he became in ten years an insane, maddened brute who slew his wife with child, and left two little boys and a girl whose grief for their father and mother is unsupportable. He came to this, My God!" cried Duncan, his voice suddenly breaking n any agony. "He came to this from the wine he drank at my table.

"What are you going to do with me, you people, you law abiding people who make laws to punish murderers? What are *we* going to do, you and I, who have engaged in this deadly work of raising, of making a thing that begot this unspeakable

tragedy? What name shall we call ourselves if we continue in our work?

" 'Why,' you say, 'this is madness, folly; this is the insanity of conscientiousness that involves the man who grows the grapes, that makes the wine in a catastrophe like this?' "

"Madness? Insanity? Call it so if you like! If you do, it is to refuse to look with eyes open and honest on the truth, to follow premise to conclusion. To be sure I had not seen it before, not wholly, though God knows there have been enough things in my life in the past month to give me pause, to help me to see. But I was blind, I was prejudiced, I was like the rest of you, proud of my superior judgment that made delicate cleavage between my responsibility and another man's ruin, the cleavage dictated by self-will, self-interest.

"But now I see. I have looked on two, *dead*—three—at the hand of drink. I have looked in the eyes, God help me! of their children, three babies that ask daily with reproachful faces, 'What have you done with my papa and mamma?' I can no longer deceive myself. I am sick with my grief and the sense of my awful responsibility in this terrible catastrophe. Henceforth I repudiate this thing in all its forms, and I give my hand and my vote and everything that is in me to the elimination of this hideous mistake, this criminal business." He paused and not a sound was heard but the hard breathing of many men. He went on.

"This is my personal stand, all I have to say for my own part in this affair. But I remember that here, the other night, I not only declared my stand at that time, but I said many things, used many arguments to establish the integrity of our cause; that in printed form my judgment in these matters has gone out all over the land with intent to convince and enlist in our cause. I have visited chambers of commerce, merchants' associations, all sorts of bodies of men representative

of the business and industrial interests of this state, and solicited their sympathy and support in the name of industrial brotherhood. I want to retract here and now all such argument. We, our industry, the wine industry, has nothing whatever in common with the other commercial interests solicited and has no call for their sympathy and support.

"Does the product of the orange ranch, or the peach orchard, the output of the shoes and clothing factories, the meat in the market and the milk of the dairies—all the industrial and the business interest enlisted by us—does their produce work for the consumer such results as does the product of the wine grape vineyard, the wineries, the distilleries and the saloons?

"Does the consumption of oranges, of milk or meat, make men lose their physical faculties and their sense of right, make them take the money that should go to feed their wives and children, to buy more oranges and milk and meat for themselves? Does patronizing the dry goods store and the grocery store and the shoe factory incite to vice and crime? Was ever a consumer of these wares sent thereby to an early grave in the hideous throes of a last, fatal sickness like alcoholism? Does these men's business cause other men and other business to be taxed for orphans homes, reformatories, asylums, prisons, potter's fields?

"*No, there's no possible comparison or likeness between the liquor business and any other lawful business.* Rather it is to be classed with those activities of men properly outlawed, because they prey on other men, and it's rank, unmitigated nerve and gall for us to go to those men who are conducting a business that doesn't lean hard on others, that stands on its own merits and doesn't prosper through other men's weakness; it's unspeakable gall and conceit for us to go to them and beg them to come to our aid, they who are paying for our paupers

and indigent while we rob them of the patronage of the man whose wages goes over the bar and into our pockets!

" 'But we must have the industry. We earn our living by it, we've got thousands in it.' Oh yes, I said it the other night. I've gone up and down the valley saying it, and the letters come pouring into my office and we run them off on the press with the same burden of argument. Here are some of them. He drew from his pocket a late copy of the Association's sheet and read. " 'Prosperity would be an obsolete word in my family for the time if the amendment should carry.' 'It would knock me out of two thousands of dollars every year.' 'It will destroy a great industry and for me a desirable revenue.'

" 'Prosperity would be obsolete in my family,' but isn't it an obsolete word in the family of the booze fighters?

" 'It would destroy a desireable revenue,' but hasn't it destroyed other desirable things for thousands of people, *precious* things, like home and happiness and peace of mind?

" 'It would knock me out of two thousand dollars a year,' But doesn't it 'knock out' a lot of people annually, of a lot of things that belong to them, families of their living, wives of their husbands, children of their opportunities; the opportunities of health, of a quiet and happy home? Hasn't it 'knocked' babies out of the chance to see life with any possibility of sound bodies and clean minds? 'Knocked out' unborn children like Elsie's from the gift of life itself?

"And yet we must keep it up for the 'desirable revenue.' This is what we say, we who boast of our altruistic age! This is what we say, men and women of the societies and secret orders that exalt the ideals of brotherhood, of the churches that preach self-denial and the sacrifice for the weaker brother for whom the Christ died!

"Oh, I'm arraigning myself, my friends. Don't forget

that! I haven't a stone to throw at other people. I wanted to say these things to you; perhaps it was to ease the hurt a bit in my own breast.

"And the liquor business intends to stay, whether people want it or not. It intends to stay. The *wine* business. Why *we're* just the side show! We're just the candy and gum show-case in the front windows to fool the public about what's going on in the back room. But the real business, the liquor traffic, the saloon, it's going to stay. How? By means of *money*. The money of Blythe and men like him of the illicit and the immoral end of the business.

"Oh, we know it, you and I, who, with one hand, write our smirk protests against the abuses inside the business that must be stopped, and with the other reach behind our backs for the rotten campaign money from the saloons, the Chinese dives and the baudy houses! Don't be afraid, I'm talking among ourselves, '*entre nous*' *you know*," added Duncan with immense sarcasm.

"And how are we going to swing the votes at the election this fall? As we always do. By rounding up all the bums from San Diego to the 'Frisco water-front for registration and setting up the drinks afterwards. Oh, no, I didn't learn this all at once. It's been a part of my unused knowledge, my 'unused increment', if you please—information deposited to my credit (or discredit), that I didn't have any present use for. I've been calling it in lately. I've been calling in all the knowledge about this thing that I could get hold of and looking at it at last for the hideous thing it is.

"I spoke the other night about my father," his voice went suddenly tender and so low that they could scarcely hear it even in the breathless silence. "I made his ambitions, his confidence in the business, part of my argument and appeal. I don't suppose you can hardly credit me with the truth when

I tell you I didn't know, I positively didn't know till tonight how he died, *why* he died. I don't know that I could speak of it now, if I didn't know that *you*, his friends, knew. You have all been generous and considerate. You thought it was kindness to keep the secret. But I wish to God some of you had told me. It might have saved *so much*!

"I want to say that that knowledge hasn't changed my love or devotion for my father in the least degree. It doesn't alter the loveableness of him, his generous heart, his fine, splendid loyalties, or his adherence to and appreciation of all things honorable and noble, it *doesn't*!" his voice thrilled with passionate defense. "But it does prove two things: that a great and a noble man can be mistaken in his convictions, and that such a man can have weaknesses, physical perhaps, that can't be overcome and must, therefore, be guarded. And if I conceive of any duty that is mine now, in the light of this discovery that has shocked and prostrated my heart anew, it is *this*, that, as his son, it is my necessity, in filial loyalty, to amend in myself any tendency to a similar weakness and to see that in no manner do I farther give my hand or influence to the thing that laid him low.

"I thank you. I thank you with all my heart for your generous friendship in the past, and your proffered support, which I cannot now accept. That's all."

CHAPTER XLI.

He bowed gravely to the audience and to the committee on the platform and turned into the wings of the small stage. Mr. Cummings was there. Instinctively his hand went out to him as to a friend, but he turned as though he had not seen him. Duncan groped in the wings for his hat. He opened a back door and went out into the street.

He had burned his first bridge, there was a whole field yet to devastate. Already he had known the first shock of the bereavements that were to be his in the loss of his friends. His cheek burned at the rebuke he had received from Mr. Cummings. It didn't matter, only to have it over with. It was early. He could accomplish all, tonight. He would drive to Corinne's. Most likely she had heard of his anticipated action from her father and would have her reception of him prepared.

Corinne was at the rear of the house in the illuminated grape arbor. He caught a glimpse of her white dress and her dainty foot swinging negligently from the hammock. She was, to his vision, in her coolness and remoteness from the tragic things of his life the past week, like a mountain spring to the eye of an exhausted traveler. He could have sunk down beside her on the damp cool earth and stayed there forever. He almost forgot his errand for the moment, in the delight of the picture as he paused. A discarded book lay in her lap. Her dainty fingers were teasing a diminutive kitten perched on the pillow beside her, its tiny provoked mouth wide to ensnare them.

Corinne had not heard of Duncan's purpose but she was irritated with him for his failure to call for a whole week, he had not seen her since the tragedy. He had telephoned once only, to know if the children could stay with them during

the funeral. Someone else had brought them over and she had turned them over to the maid. He had not even called her up to thank her.

As he approached a faint hope sprang up in Duncan. How beautiful she was, how kind! She had been so gracious about the child en that day and had looked after them so well. Her face was now charmin and tender as she gathered the indignant kitten into her two hands and snuggled him under her chin with a little exclamation of endearment. She was so human. Perhaps—why shouldn't she understand, why not see all, as did he, and with sweet and gracious spirit put aside the disappointment she must feel in the abandonment of his prospects and their early marriage, and wait for him! Wait, till when? Ah, he could not tell. His affairs were surely in a bad way, but wait, as women had done before, as heroic women will do always for the man they love.

"Corinne!"

She dropped the kitten precipitately. His surprised catship, rightly accusing Duncan as the cause for his displacement arched himself in cat spite and with a violent "spit", like a hissing firecracker leaped out of sight. Duncan laughed at the absurd performance and striding to her dropped down on a stool at Corrinne's side:

"Jealous, is he? Well I certainly entertained the same sentiments when I saw him the recipient of your caresses a moment ago." She gave a slight shrug and drew her light scarf about her shoulders.

"Yes?" she said. "You have not seemed to crave those attentions particularly yourself. I haven't seen you for a week, dear. You must have been occupied?"

"Occupied!" he spoke in a shocked voice. "Why yes, you know surely, how occupied I must have been. There are so

many things to see to, to think of in a case like that," he shuddered. "I have been busy day and night."

"Oh I suppose so," she said, indifferently, "but I should think you might have given me a little thought."

"A little thought, a *little* thought! Corinne I have thought of you day and night, day and night. That's why I came here now, oh, Corinne!" His voice broke suddenly and as she looked at him in surprise she saw that his face was very white and his hair where the light struck it, surely that was gray in his hair.

"Well," she said with a grudging smile, "you don't seem to have learned yet where to come with your troubles. Tell them to the right source and they are always settled for you, you know." She rallied a laugh, but his grave face held her.

"*Troubles*, yes, that's it! That's what I came to talk about. But I don't know how to begin. Corinne, you must know that this frightful catastrophe has made me feel differently about some things."

"Some things?" she looked at him, mystified, and he hurried on.

"Yes, dear, can't you understand? About many things, about drink, about the liquor business, *our* business." He paused, gazing into her eyes with a pathetic hope of understanding and sympathy, but they were expressionless but for amazement. He hurried on recklessly precipitating the end in a sentence. "I've just come from a meeting of the wine growers. I've called off my candidacy for the legislature. I'm out of the race, out of the business, for good and all."

"Duncan!"

He had never heard such a tone from her lips, *her* lips from which he had believed only the tenderest most womanly tones came. The word was a condensation of all the amazement, disappointment and contempt that a selfish and defeated

woman could express. It stung him like a whip lash full across the face. She sprang to her feet and her face under the electric globe was chalk white; her breast heaved as though she had been in a race:

"Well I always knew you were a sentimental, slow, stupid fellow but I didn't suppose you equal to this. Why, you're a *fool*! A *fool*!" She stamped her foot, angrily.

He had risen and his face, white before, was ghastly, but he stood quietly looking at her, just looking at her.

"Why do you look at me like that?" she cried. "Surprised are you? Shocked? Thought I'd take this, as I did the others, your crazy break with Blythe, your silly affair at the Non Pareil, thought I'd just accept all these evidences of asinine ability, welcome them as the tokens of my future prosperity with a husband of your brain power?"

"Good night," he said and turned on his heel.

Duncan went around the house and down the walk to the gate, in passing the veranda steps he stooped under the overhanging branch that had caught Corinne's hair the night he kissed her. It was swaying out across the walk now. He moved it aside mechanically with his hand as he passed, and he remembered.

He went out the large arched gate. Corinne's little spaniel slipped out after him and fell with demonstrative caresses upon him. He turned and put him gently through the gate again and saw his sad, disappointed dog eyes watch him as he turned away. He went on across the road and up to the house. He did all things as though he had come from Corinne's after an evening of pleasant ordinary intercourse. He was like a man that is deathly wounded and knows it, knows that when he takes away the hand that stays and staunches for the moment that the life blood will gush from him and he will fall.

He went into the house and up to his room. His mother heard him come in. She had known he was to be present at a meeting but of the nature of it she was ignorant. Duncan had not told her of the storm that had possessed his brain since the night of the murder. It is a strange thing that often "nearest of kin" may sit hours or a lifetime beside another and never know or sense the death throes that are going on within his heart and brain. But Duncan's outward appearance, his haggard face and haunted eyes might easily have been interpreted as the result of the shock received from the tragedy.

He had not told his mother of the step he contemplated. Something told him his will might be weakened and even love of his mother must not be allowed to change his course. Yet another thing had prevented. One of the most pathetic of human griefs is the first discovery by a child of fault in a loved parent. It is a discovery that must come to all, since parenthood does not involve perfection. To few is the discovery reserved until so late as with Duncan. He had vaguely acknowledged failings in his father, lovable failings mostly. The knowledge of his father's weakness was the first to vitally mar that dear image. Simultaneous with it was a more serious and painful revelation. His father, his mother, alike had been guilty of a great remissness toward him, an error in judgment fraught with terrible and far reaching consequences. He could understand their thought toward him, to spare him the pain, the disappointment of that knowledge, but therein lay the crux of his disillusionment; the element of selfishness had entered into their motives, unconsciously no doubt, but it was there. To preserve Cameron's pride, to spare his humiliation while alive, to reserve his memory as the worshipped and adored object it was, that too, was the motive involved in their denial, delicate,

subtle; many would not have sensed it. Duncan did with a poignancy exaggerated by the recent tragedy.

If he had only known! If he had only known! He might have saved Morton, by counsel, by kind words, if he had approached him with compassion, with pardon instead, as he did, with a brutal fist. His mind writhed in the agony of the thought.

It was this feeling of disappointment, of deep and unexpressed hurt toward his mother that helped to seal his characteristically reserved lips and cause him to leave till the last, till things were irretreviably settled, the intelligence of his break with his friends, with his material prospects, with Corinne. Yet now, when all others had cast him off, he had the wistfulness of the little boy. He wanted his mother's comfort, his mother's arms.

She came at last as he lay stretched across his bed. He had not undressed. The whole meaning of Corinne's dismissal had taken him and he groaned in his anguish. Here too, was, bitterness beyond bitterness; Corinne, the beautiful, the cherished, the altogether lovely, to have thrown off the guise and in her vulgar railings, shown herself the common woman.

His mother approached the door on her way to her room. She paused at his threshold with surprise, the light from the hall falling across the bed.

"Duncan, what ails ye, are ye sick?"

"Yes, I'm sick mother, so sick I could die!" She came in with concern, and seated herself on the bed by him.

"Ye mustn't grieve yirsel' sae aboot *that*, it's awfu' an' beyond words but it cudna be helped. We done wh' we cud." He shuddered but reached out and found her hand.

"It isn't that, altogether. Oh I am very selfish that I should care, or have a thought for myself in the face of this

other thing. But I'm sore hurt," there were times when Duncan unconsciously framed his mother's phrases. "Listen mother."

He told her all. His anguish of mind over his sense of personal responsibility, his doubt concerning his father, occasioned by Morton's words, his visit to the doctor and the confirmation. She started at that and drew her hand away from his.

"He shouldna' hae told ye!" she said, in a strange voice.

"Oh yes he should, indeed he should, mother. I should have known. Oh, I wish to God I had known long ago!"

Then he hurried on, telling of his resignation of the secretaryship, telling of the night's meeting and his speech and withdrawal, of Corinne. He paused. He was very tired, but it was done, the last hard thing accomplished and he would have his mother's forgiveness now, and her comfort. He waited for her. He waited a moment.

"Mother?" his voice held surprise. She rose then, swiftly, and turned toward the door, the light from the hall on her face showed it very white and sharp.

"Mother!" he cried, in concern, starting toward her. Then she turned.

"Say nae word, lad!" she cried harshly. "Ye canna say mair, ye hae done it noo, deserted yir faither an' me an' yir faither's friends, deserted the chances ye had to mak' a great man o' yirsel' an' honor t' yir faither's name and to his family. Whist, away!" as his arms implored her. "There's naething mair to be said." She swept past him and up the stairs. Duncan fell forward on his knees beside the bed and the night was very dark.

He roused in the early morning from exhausted sleep, following hours of waking anguish. As consciousness with its bitter realities broke upon him he felt one desire, one craving,

the hills—the hills—oh, the healing of the hills! The wide clean hills, the lonely hills, where no human faces looked. The hills, the free hills, where loads drop from one and breath comes deep. He must seek them if but for a day, a few hours.

He knew the way he would take, and the place; the old trail up to Welches' summit cabin. It stood alone, isolated, where the view swept the who e valley to the right and left. Below were the places of the summer people that lolled in their hammocks and waited for the Saturday night tango parties. They were too indolent to find this spot, to climb to this noble outlook where the free winds from east and west, blew. It was a place all his own, or rather, Marlinee's first and his afterwards. Formerly old Welch, the girl's uncle, had invited his family's use of it whenever desire called. It went with the other possessions willed to Marlinee and she had renewed the informal arrangement. It was his favorite haunt when rare opportunity offered. He would go there now. He *must* go. Here in the valley he would go mad from the conflict of his distracted life, the confusion of arraigning voices that, turn whichever way he would, accused him of neglect, of mischoice. Even Marlinee had deserted him, Marlinee who would *know*, who would understand. He had not seen her since the first day after the tragedy. Where was she? He wanted her.

He set out on foot under a scorching sun. He did not mind. The heat rays burned through his thin shirt to his fevered body, it was a counter irritant to the wounds he carried. He was glad for the breath of the open, the smell of desert and the wash, of the resinous weeds ripening in the scorch of the summer. Before him the blue rim of the mountains rose, cool, remote, the trees jagged against the sky.

He tramped all day and half the night and when the moon had pushed its slow way at last up the back of the ridge and

found Welch's little shelf and clearing Duncan had gained the cabin. He threw off his pack. He loosened and cast his belt from him. He fell, too weary for thought or food, across the cabin bunk, sound asleep.

CHAPTER XLII.

Marlinee turned in her last page of copy, detailing the doings of the Rescherche club at their final pre-vacation dansant. Society and mankind in general went its way as though tragedy did not exist.

Oh, it was a brutal world! Men and women moved on uncaring, unseeing, while their kind dropped by the way, by accident or sickness or hideous catastrophe. They swept on, voicing their petty concerns; tango parties and household helps, ambitions for a place in the sporting column or a seat in the senate. They were like beasts, like the lowest swarm of created things that, gathering to the food morsel, tracks across its dead. In the office, while her eyes still saw Elsie's dead face and her ears still heard the sobs of Elsie's little ones, there was laughter, the gossip of the candidates and wagers on the afternoon game. Ah, she could not stand it! This was her last story, the Rescherche Club, and she would be gone on a short vacation McWhirter, in view of her white face and trembling hands, had granted her.

She flipped the sheet from her typewriter roller and jabbed it on the copy hook. She swept her desk clean of its disorder, shut and locked her drawer and hurried to the dressing room. She caught up her suit-case and ran out of the building to the car. Already as she sat in the open, the wind sweeping her hot face, she felt relief, rest. She was free! Tomorrow she would face away to the hills, her prime tonic and renewer, the place where always sanity and sleep, poise and patience, returned to her no matter in what condition of need she sought them.

Not hers the conventional outing; a seat in the auto stage, somebody's smoke in front of her obscuring the view, and

the smell of the motor filling her nostrils; a bedroom in some popular inn, boasting the over done artistry of the ordinary mountain resort. Instead, her broncho, "Mischief," a canteen and blankets at her back; her destination—Well, a woman can't quite sleep alone of nights on a mountain road! She would have to stop with people at some of the camps, accept the hospitality urged by some of her friends, already, to use Society's distorted phrase, "vacationing."

Glad would be safe with Mammy. Duncan? She had not seen him since the day of the funeral and then not to speak to him. Their hands had met in the last sad service for the dead as they laid, each in his own tribute, with blinded eyes in the cold hands.

Each had thought, surely, each had thought the same things. One instant covert glance at Duncan's set face and she could have sworn that at last sight, vision, with its awful accompaniment of remorse had come. But the following day she read of the call for the wine men's meeting and his name—Cameron—announced to repeat to a larger and more representative meeting, his declarations of the night before the tragedy; the night before the tragedy when he had given his hand and all that was in him to this thing, to the exploitation of the thing that had slain Elsie and made a murderer and suicide of Morton.

And he could do *this*. He could take up his work again, delayed a moment in order to bury the dead—the dead of his business! Well, it was the last. It was over! All in her that had climbed and clung to the figure of Duncan in love, in devotion, in loyalty and hope, fell with the crash of the image itself. Ah, she must get away, forget—forget that he had ever been, that such weakness, such blindness, such persistent, voluntary, shameful selfishness could live in a form of such deceiving beauty, strength and promise as that of Duncan!

She must go. This week no doubt, or soon, the office must announce his engagement to Corinne. In the announcement of his alliance with the vain and wordly woman, was involved the last commitment of himself to that course which bespoke absolute self-seeking above all other and higher clains.

How long she had hoped for Duncan, prayed for him! Not to possess him—though her heart was wholly his. What she had told Elsie had been true. She would never marry any man between whom and herself, her convictions of right stood. It was not a voluntary thing, her determination, but something innate and fundamental for which she was not responsible. There are some things stronger than love or hate, than any personal emotion. These are the inherited things, the loyalties, the principals and convictions that are men's, made ready to wear as it were, and which are reinforced by their own conclusions, reached by inherited roads of reasoning.

In Marlinee this passion of principal was developed to an unusual degree. She came from a line of men and women of convictions, her knowledge of her father and of his career invested self-sacrifice and service to others with the value of first importance.

That thing that stood in her eyes as the synonym of all selfishness, to her keen judgments whose deductions were made in a man's world, as the embodiment of egotistic greed, was the liquor business. The man who chose the liquor business with its imposition of human suffering, as the way to his livelihood, and prosperity was a man between whom and herself there could be no possible compromise. Duncan was such a man—but not in heart—she had thought, she had been sure. His convictions were wholly imposed; some day he would throw them off and his own personality would emerge with vigorous new judgments and independent conclusions and

alliances. Then he would be a new man taking the place in the world of one who realizes his responsibilities.

She had hoped, she had prayed, and *this* had come! She did not blame God. Her biology and her theology were curiously interlinked but this time neither was accountable for Duncan's action. It was his own independent choice. He had looked at both arguments. He could not have helped but see, in the face of these terrible evidences, and he had deliberately chosen his way.

Ah—the pain of it was greater than her own personal loss, the loss that she knew from the first must be hers if Duncan took this way. She was so conscious that it might have been otherwise, that she might have lost Duncan, the Duncan she had hoped him to be, but not Duncan himself. She was vividly conscious of the things within her made to attract, to hold love; things that drew other men to her. She knew Duncan's frank affection and his dependence upon her. She knew more. Her woman's cleverness told her just what small concession what slight relinquishments, how small an assumption of the worldly charm, practised by Corinne, and assumed by herself would serve to convert that affection and dependence into conquest.

She desired him. How she desired him! But that stern thing within her soul forbade her. She stretched her arms wistfully toward him across the barrier while he was yet fair and hopeful in his indecision of life, but when he rose from that hour they had shared together beside the dead with his purpose formed and unmovable, she turned tear-blinded and groping to the Power within, grateful it was *herself*, her uncompromising greater self, that had withheld her.

Mischief, the broncho, heard it all, poured into his soft, quivering ears as they paused at the canyon spring for a drink. He munched the wet grass beside the trough enterprisingly

and listened with quite as much real attention as some polite humans give. Marlinee had slipped from the saddle to stretch and rest herself. She pressed close to the warm shoulders and laid her face against the soft nose of Mischief as she talked. She drew there-from a sense of companionship and sympathy.

"But there—I don't believe after all that you were listening I don't believe you know a thing I said," sighed the girl, as the broncho reached suddenly for a far and tempting weed. "Oh, Mischief, 'et tu Brute!' That's a pun, dear." She climbed wearily into the saddle again.

Marlinee visited Camp No. 1 and Camp No. 2 of the "Jolly Timers" with whom she was socially allied. She rode on to the big hotel beginning these days to seethe with the first summer gaieties. At the hotel the evening stage came in with the valley papers. She had turned her back from the valley and journalism three days before with the feeling that she never wanted to see either again, but such was the grip of civilization that here she was out with the rest, out to meet the automobile and get the news.

She bought a copy of the Journal and withdrew to a corner of the hotel veranda under an electric light, to read. The first words her eyes fell upon were the headlines announcing Duncan's withdrawal from the assembly race. She gave an exclamation and stared at them. She read them over and fell feverishly on the story. It was sensational, giving full details and quotations from the adress. It excused absence of an interview on the ground that Mr. Cameron could not be located.

He had left early on a two days trip—just where it could not be learned.

Duncan—Duncan had *seen*, had repudiated his former business—broken with his old associates—thrown over the assemblyman's race! It had come! Duncan was a new man! An

emotion so great that it seemed her body could not bear it, took her. She dropped her head on the porch rail and in the seclusion of her corner she sobbed for very happiness as if her heart would break.

When the paroxysm of her reaction was over she grasped another thought. It was not usual for the afternoon paper to play up like a new story, one that fell to the morning paper and McWhirter had played this one up in his best style, on the front page. What did that mean?

She ran and bought the morning papers from the news stand, and scanned them. The Sun had a brief account of the meeting without details, merely stating the surprise of the wine men in the announcement of Cameron and his withdrawal of his candidacy. The other, Blythe's sheet, overflowed across two columns with a lurid account of the "traitor to the cause." Both had acted in the interest of their constituients, the former the better class of wine grape men and their sympathizers, the latter, Blythe, showing his hand again, with the backing of the liquor men, enraged by Duncan's daring.

And McWhirter—McWhirter had come out for the Drys! There could be no other explanation. In fact, the matter was settled when she turned to the editorial page. In an editorial bearing the unmistakeable marks of McWhirter's inimitable pen, was a splendid and fearless enunciation of the paper's new policy. The rumors she had heard before leaving the office were true. McWhirter had bought the controlling interest from the editor-in-chief, Morrison, whose growing invalidism necessitated his retirement, and the first issue under the new management announced his new and changed convictions.

This was joy on joy and Marlinee for very happiness slept little that night. There is the proverbial "last straw" to an excess of that quality as to an excess of its contrary, and Mar-

linee knew it in the letter she received next morning from Norris. It was written on copy paper and occupied an envelop of the largest office size, the pertinent admonition on the cover being "Eat Raisins!" It detailed in one paragraph all the news of the office for the past four days ending with the postscript—like a mere afterthought—like one of the most inconsequential things in the world.

"Oh, yes, Duncan and Corinne are busted so I don't get the job of writing up their society 'funeral.' Duncan is Dry, now, so Marlinee, go to it! I always did want to see you win out."

"The impudent little rascal!" cried Marlinee, and her nose went into the air, but her heart was beating against her side as though it would break through. All night long in the back of her brain while her heart raised it inexpressible praise for Duncan, the thought worded itself, "And what of Corinne?" and her breath came short at the thought. "Ah—I must not think of it—I must not," she told herself "This is enough, to see character grow in Duncan; insight, independence, courage and the spirit of big self denial." It was enough; she thanked God for that. But now—

CHAPTER XLIII

Early, Marlinee turned her pony's nose up the trail to the cabin. The hotel could not hold her and her joy. She wanted to get away—away from the people—in a large place by herself, where she could voice her rapture. There on the broad flat, or in the little thicket behind she would build her an altar, perhaps, like the happy people of old and offer on it her sacrifice of thanksgiving for Duncan—Duncan and his new vision.

She could not ride—it was too slow. She slipped from the saddle and trudged along beside the broncho, her shoulder to his, her face pressed againts his, while she whispered—

"Mischief—Mischief—do you hear, Honey? Duncan has changed. He's seen a light—he's thrown it all over—all of it! Oh Mischief—do you hear me?" She took his face between her hands and drew it to her till she could see herself in his two great eyes.

"Mischief—do you hear? Then *answer—say something*—show me you're glad—or I—I'll just burst with gladness, myself!" A sunflower she had tucked in her khaki blouse tickled his nose, he wrinkled it and showed his teeth with a surprising semblance of a broad horse smile and she kissed him.

"You dear!" she said in sobbing breath.

She was full of a great merriment—she ran ahead of him laughing. She sang snatches of rolicking songs, she whistled till she had all the birds along the trail answering and once, with an indrawn breath she dropped on her knees in the path—she could not wait for the heights and the stone altar. She dropped her face in her hands and then cast it bck full in the face of the sun—"Oh God, Oh God, Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!"

When she reached the flat she rode into a little shady thicket nearby, She threw the lines over Mischief's head to the ground, which for a well bred broncho means as good as tied. She slipped from the saddle, and shook down her short riding breeches and stretched one cramped leg and then the other luxuriously—she had ridden the last hour. Then she ran down the slope toward the house; ran and slid like a little boy on the smooth pine needles and dashed up breathless to the cabin door.

Welch had never locked his cabin and Marlinee followed the same code. Anybody was welcome to its hospitality, sought at the end of one of the hardest trails on the mountains. It was an ideal spot for her occasional outings, utterly isolated, yet the camps were so near, below, that she could almost have dropped a pebble from her doorstep into them and the voice of their night rollickings reached her on the breeze. She would stay here today, tonight, she was not afraid; she was accustomed to going about alone in a city of men which held far more threat than this lovely spot in the heart of God's hills. Then, too, she carried a bright, quick actioned little thing in her belt, and she knew how to use it.

She dashed open the door. The bright rays of the morning sun revealed dust and disorder—and a man's form lying prone on the cot across from the table. She started back, her hand involuntarily seeking her belt, but the next moment it had slipped to her bosom where her heart leaped up and back and left her faint.

"Duncan!"

Oh!—was he dead?—had he killed himself?" was her first awful thought and she reached him—her knees nearly failing under her. "Duncan!"

She laid her hand fearfully on him but his great back heaved

in strong and regular respirations. He was not dead. He was not hurt—perhaps he was sick. How did he come there?

"Duncan?" she called in great wonderment, but softly that she might not rouse him too quickly. "Duncan, what's the matter, how did you get here?" He moved, groaned, with the impatience of a tired man, and fell back into sleep. She looked on him with a great amazement and tenderness. How haggard he was in spite of his great strength, how worn, and his temples—gray? Why, Duncan had not been gray before—gray streaking his bright hair everywhere—*Duncan*! How he must have suffered!

She would not wake him, he was tired—tired out. That was why he had come—to get away. To get away, as she had done. She laughed a trembling little laugh, full of wonder. She sat down beside him. She would wait till he woke. In a moment she would go and get her saddle bags with her light provisions in them. He had had no breakfast—nothing in the cabin was disturbed. She would have breakfast all ready for him when he awoke.

She rose with a great gladness, but he stirred, roused, sat up and stared about him confusedly. She turned and waited—she could not have spoken. He looked at her at last, stupidly, with eyes that failed to see, to understand. He drew his hand across his head and got up, then his hands went out:

"Marlinee—Marlinee!" he cried. "What—where am I?" Then memory struck across his dazed brain and he staggered to a chair and dropped into it, a great groan falling from him. She was at his side.

"Duncan! You *are* hurt—or sick! Tell me—what can I do for you?"

"Oh nothing, nothing!" he shook his head. "Child—how did you get here?" He spoke like an old man, an old, broken man.

"No—don't—" as she put her hands on him in concern. "Don't worry. It's nothing that can be helped—now! It's all past and gone and too late—" he groaned. "I've been weak—I've been blind— and in my blindness terrible things have happened. Antonio, Morton, Elsie—the eyes of the dead and the living alike reproach me. Oh My God—I wish I could die!" His head fell forward in his arms and great sobs shook him.

She stood speechless, overwhelmed. The grief of a strong man is a pitiful thing, the grief of this man—Duncan—the strong, the tender, the bearer of other peoples griefs and woes was unbearable. Her heart was wrung at the sight of his overthrow, it was insupportable. The tears dropped slowly through his fingers—tears from Duncan? She could not have it!

"Dear," she cried, "you must *not*—this is madness! You must not blame yourself so—you must not involve yourself like this in things for which you were not responsible. You are not to blame. You were conscientious in your convictions and your conduct was guided by them and even your convictions were not your own—they were imposed!" she cried, indignantly. "You have never had anything of your own. Oh, I know—your life—your thoughts—your choices, were made for you. You are not to be condemned for that—you are *not*!" Her hands went out to him. Duncan took them in a grip that hurt but he groaned.

"No, no, you mustn't say that. You mustn't lend me defense. I have made fearful mistakes and I must suffer for them—even now when I would make up for them..when I tried to make up for them—I brought suffering on myself and others, on Mr. Cummings—Corinne— It's all over—it's no matter about *that*—but my mother, even she don't understand. She suffers. She thinks I have disgraced my father now—and—" His big hand closed as though a spasm of

physical pain took him—"that *does* for me!" His head went down on the table again and his shoulders shook with grief that found no utterance.

Marlinee stood silent, her whole being going out to comfort and heal this boy—this great boy! Oh, to take him in her arms—and comfort him. She *would* comfort him—he was hers—even his mother had cast him off. Whose the right now, but hers, to comfort and defend—to bring his broken mind and spirit back to peace and sanity! All her love, the impulse of her sex rose within her. She laid her arm across his shoulder and drew him to her with a jesture of possession, of inexpressible tenderness and protection. "Dear!" her voice held a poignant hurt. She laid her face close to his. "Listen dear," she said.

She was calm now—the sudden power and resource of a woman were hers. She lifted his big shoulders, bringing him back gently till his head rested against her and his eyes looked wonderingly up into her face, like a child. She began, gently:

"I haven't known you always, but I seem to know, somehow, just what you were like when you were a little boy, and because *you* don't know, I'll tell you." Her voice was very quiet and he leaned back, relaxing suddenly, like a tired child. She smoothed his hair softly as she talked.

"You were a little boy—a little tow-headed boy!" she laughed tenderly. "And the first thing you knew was your mother's face, a loving face, an anxious face, and her hands that were always busy. And the next thing you knew was your father.

"And your mother did all the things for you that a mother does but she was always having to run away, when you would like to have had her stay longer—she was so busy. But your father stayed. He never had to run away. He talked to you, and he told you funny stories and showed you curious things.

So that it was your mother that you needed always, and loved, but it was your father that you admired and adored.

"And then there was another—your brother. And he was very wonderful. You didn't discover him till a little later, or rather, you hardly knew the difference at first, they were so much alike in the wonderful things they said, and their wonderful ways.

"But very soon, while you were just a little fellow, you learned why your mother was so busy, why she was always running away when you wanted her. It was because there were things to be done, things for your father and your brother to give them comfort and make their lives easy. And so very soon after that you began helping her, helping her to think and to *do*, so that your father and brother might not have to work or worry or be in any way different from the lighthearted, entertaining father and brother they were. You'd rather do those things, do a great many things, than have them changed. It seemed right that you should, you and your mother, that you should serve them with your hands and that they should give to you of their brightness and brilliancy. You were very proud of them.

"And you gave them, besides, another great thing." She was speaking slowly, choosing her words with care, fearful of startling him to defense, of offending, yet determined that he should learn that which would remove the last veil from his eyes and clear his vision wholly. As she talked her heart prayed for words—for the right words. "You gave them the power to think for you, and decide for you, and to settle and establish all your choices. For they seemed somehow so much better able to do it.

"So, you gave, and they gave, each in his own way. And the service of each to each was beautiful—indeed it was *very* beautiful!" Her eyes filled. She felt him tremble under her

hands—his lips quivered and the tears stood out beneath the closed eyelids, but she went on.

"The only trouble was that you gave too much, more than they could have asked, more than they *would* have asked if they had known. You gave yourself, and all that was in you, the privilege of making you what you were to be. You gave all in one splendid sacrifice. Oh no! Not that you knew it. It was all consistent, in an order of things wholly abnormal and wrong," she said, boldly.

"People do not understand. They do not know what weight of influence they lay on their children, especially if those children are devoted to them. Nor can they understand how that influence exerted from the beginning, especially on the less self-willed souls, leaves them no way of choice, no way of independence, of initiative. Some day—" she said, dreamily with sudden digression, "when I have *my* children, I shall remember.

"So everything was imposed, that belonged to you, even your most intimate choices and preferences." He started, thinking of Corinne. It was true, it was the barreness of his life, the lack of any self-gratification, self-luxury, that had impelled him to aspire to this sumptutous girl. That, and the willed wish of his father.

Marlinee was sitting beside him now, quietly. The climax was passed; he was himself again. He bent forward on the table, his chin in his hands, looking afar with his steady eyes. What he saw, what his thoughts were she could not guess. She prayed it was the full revelation.

"So that's all, dear. You see you are no more to blame for your convictions than I am for mine. They were born in us, they were greater than ourselves; we could not resist them." She drew a quick breath and rose from her chair. He turned and caught her hand.

"Marlinee, you are wonderful! You are kind beyond words. I see it now, I see it!" His eyes shone with a great light. "I have seen it, dimly, I have known it, before, but I was afraid to look at it, to look at it in the face—my life, *their* lives. I was afraid for the pain of it. But you have done it for me. You have taken away the veil, and in such a way that the pain is *gone*—" he spoke with a deep breath—a sob—like one who has seen a catastrophe pass. "Ah, no one else could have done it. No one else could have done it but you. God bless you, Marlinee!"

She drew her hand away at last from the touch of his reverent kiss and stood gazing out of the little window into the green thicket beyond. Emotion shook her to the depths. The strain of the past hour, the gladness of Duncan's deliverance and the memory of other things, her nearness to him and his dearness. She had held him this moment; she had warmed him with her warmth and wooed him with her hope and vision back to life and strength again. Ah—God was good, he had given her much!

The moment was too tense. She gave a little shiver and laugh and turned to him. "I'm hungry—there's bacon and flapjack stuff in my saddle pack but I expect the *man* to make the fire!" He started, relief in his face. "Sure, I forgot," he said and strode out the door. She watched him shouldering his way up the slope to Mischief.

She stood over him as he coaxed a fire under a battered camp stove outside the door, and she laid the rich strips of bacon in the steaming pan, turning them deftly with her hunting knife. She had rolled up her sleeves and turned in the neck of her shirtwaist. The whiteness of her bosom, met by the sunburned throat, was dazzling.

"You have the nerve," she laughed, "to get to my house first!"

"You had the nerve," he said, "to run away from me! Marlinee, what made you do it?" Marlinee found it necessary to seek the cabin for new supplies.

"What made you do it—Marlinee?" Duncan persisted. She had delayed that he might forget his question. She did not wish to tell him, to revive anything. There was no need. It was joy to see him himself, to know the nightmare of the past week—her thoughts of him as he had been were over forever.

"Duncan, see what delicious strips of bacon!" She held up a slice, delicately balanced on her knife-point. "I'm powerful hungry. Lets not talk any more till we've 'et,' as Winston says."

"But, Marlinee, listen! I want to tell you how much I've missed you. How much I've wanted you. I've been sick and sore that you weren't there, I'm so accustomed to your help and your cousel, to telling everything to you, Marlinee. I can't say what it means to me. You're so kind!" He reached for the little disengaged hand, but it was gone. Marlinee had sprung to her feet. Her cheeks were very red—they had been too near the flame. Her eyes flashed in the old fashion and her little chin was tilted high. She eyed Duncan long and curiously from under her lashes. Then, with a quick little insolent laugh, she stretched both arms and yawned.

"Ye-e-es. *So* kind! Quite like a grandmother—No?"

It was a merry dinner. Reaction had come for each of them, reaction from the last hour and the last terrible days, and with it a lightheartedness, childish in its quality. The woods rang with their innocent hilarity. After dinner Duncan smoked in contentment under a great pine tree, his head pillowed in the fragrant needles. Marlinee was close by. The sweet, cool wind of the forest caressed him, soothing like a kind hand, blowing from him for the time all care and anxiety, all thought of the future, not soreness and hurt, nor sorrow, a deep and never to be forgotten sorrow, yet even these were assuaged—

allayed—as though Marlinee's words had drawn a thorn from his inflamed mind—and the hills were a sweet and healing sedative, easing all the remaining hurt.

They talked of many things and she told him, now, of how she came to leave the valley, and of the papers and Norris' letter telling of Duncan's step. He had thought her in the valley all the time, and somehow cognizant of all his experiences, even with Corinne. He told her dispassionately of the girl, and of his disappointment in her manner of receiving his news. But on this point Marlinee did not lend her usually instructive observations. There were some forms of knowledge Marlinee possessed that she kept to herself. Then their talk drifted to other things, to pleasanter things. Sometimes they were silent while Marlinee read in desultory fashion from the magazine in her hands or looked beyond her book to the checkerboard valley below.

Duncan woke with a shiver and sat up with a start. The woods were in twilight.

"What the devil! Where—" he muttered. Then he suddenly remembered. "Marlinee!" he cried. His voice held apology. He sprang up and pounded down the hill, full of self-reproach. Why, it was late! Marlinee must have started supper and fed the pony. Darn it, what a cad he was!

But Marlinee was not in the cabin nor the pony in the thicket. After he had come back, bewildered, he found a little note stuck to the table with his pocket knife. He seized it quickly and read:

"On to Durfey's! Don't apologize, I wouldn't have disturbed you for anything. You had *such* a good sleep. You must do that every day, it'll do you a lot of good. And stay till you have lost that lean and hungry look and have some fat on your

bones—I like fat men. Don't drop matches and don't forget to put out your camp fire.

Yours,
"Grandmama"

Duncan said a large, bad word. Then he sat down and stared at himself. He had forgotten—in his new relief, in his happiness in finding Marlinee—he had forgotten everything. Conventionalities—there were no such thing! He had actually never thought in his relief and utter contentment at being with her again, with the utter naturalness of it like *this*, just they two, alone in this dear intimate fashion, he had actually never thought of the impossibility of it. He looked at himself in amazement, but it was so. Marlinee, woman like, had thought of and provided for it, and she had gone. Heavens! *She* had gone instead of him, left the cabin he had usurped, sought some other haven for the night. What else was there for her to do, in delicacy!

He sat in an agony of self-reproach. The cold sweat stood out on him, the sweat of chagrin. He could not endure the thought of his position of what she must think of him. Marlinee, whose regard he desired above everything else! He had never before entertained the thought of losing it. Now he knew that he could not lose it. It would be unendurable. Not that she would despise him. She would only laugh at his stupidity. Duncan "stupid" in the eyes of Marlinee! The thought agonized him. Yet that would not be new; surely she had often had cause to think him as stupid, slow. But now it was different.

Suddenly he realized *how* different and *why*. He knew at last!

Why had he not thought of it before? And she had told him

everything, interpreted everything else in his heart. Had she read this, too, and fled before the knowledge?

"*Marlinee*!" His hands went out in the darkness and with it all the longing of his man's soul.

CHAPTER XLIV

Duncan's address before the wine people had made an immense impression. His ardor, his tremendous vigor, the passionate enunciation of his new convictions had fallen on his hearers and for the time enthralled the consciousness of all with the conception of the liquor traffic which he now held. All the embellishments of oratory that characterized and lent ornament to Duncan's former address, making it a classic of its kind, were absent now, and the raw heart and conscience of the man was bared in his stinging arraignment of himself and his industry. It was something his hearers could never forget.

On none had the impressions of the evening fallen with greater effect than on Mr. Cummings. He was late in arriving. He was making his way to the platform just as Duncan was called, and paused in the wings of the small stage. Duncan's first words, the first tones of his voice struck and held him. He listened in astonishment, in unbelief at the pure nerve of the man, his daring, his astounding surety of himself, expressed in the blunt, uncompromising statements with which he began his speech. As Duncan proceeded a flame that had seemingly been kept in abeyance, flashed out. It seemed to envelop the man; he was on fire. His new convictions were a conflagration in which one saw—old prejudices consumed before the eye and the new motive, self-denial, the thought for the other man, rise to imperishable place.

All recognized, all responded to the persuasion. For the first fifteen minutes Duncan took to enunciate his new faith, the entire assemblage was an involuntary unit in its acceptance of the new creed. Then the reaction came. Whitten was the first to recover. He saw Cummings in the wings and

called to him sharply. The latter turned with an abruptness that lost the moment to Duncan and left the boy with the impression of repudiation.

"Say, what do you mean by this?" demanded Whitten in a fierce aside; his face was white. "This is *your* work. Now go out there and explain it to the audience—it's up to you!"

"I've nothing to say!" answered Cummings, pugnaciously. He was not accustomed to taking orders.

"Well, you have—or you ought to have. This is a Hell of a mess to have put us in and then step aside and leave us."

"Oh, all right, if you feel that way I'll just do it—I'll have *my* say, too," answered Mr. Cummings, angrily, and he stepped out on the platform.

"Gentlemen," he began, "You have heard what Cameron had to say. He asked me to see that he had an opportunity to speak to you. He was scheduled on the program for a speech, presumably one favoring our interests. He said he could not take the part expected of him, but as an honest man he wished rather to come before you than publicly, make his renunciation of his former convictions and give you the reason for that renunciation. I thought that fair. The gentlemen of the program committee disagreed with me but as general chairman of the campaign I used my authority to overrule their judgment and to insist that Cameron have his chance, the chance to take the stand of a fearless man, no matter how you or I may judge his sentiments. It there's any blame forthcoming for the matter I'm ready to assume it." He bowed and took his seat.

There seemed nothing further to be said. Whitten had received two blows in rapid succession and seemed unable to rally his defense. He sullenly resumed the chair and called on the next speaker.

For Mr. Cummings, speeding home in his machine, the inci-

dent constituted an era. It is not often that a man who has reached the age of fifty-five meets with an influence that overturns the entire structure of his former life and establishes another, new from the foundations up; but the boy's words had done this for Cummings. Yet not so much the boy's words; it was more the spirit, fresh, young, fearless in declaration of his newly conceived propaganda of life.

What was he that he should withhold the service and sympathy of his few remaining years, when this lad gave all, yielded all, all the dazzling wordly promise of his young life—ambition, wordly honor, even love itself—threw all into the balance in a splendid and daring self-renunciation in the name of his new faith. He had long resisted that faith—Cummings—the vision of the larger altruism. Now he knew that God had given him once again the opportunity of embracing it by the inspiration furnished in this beloved boy.

He saw plainly the call, the call to all men and women who had been users of drink as an established custom, a part of the domestic regimen, of hospitality and tradition, and who, so far, had suffered no ill effects there from. It was, in the terse and common phrase, "up to" such men and women now, in a time and age when drink was taking hold on the peculiar temperament of the people, especially of the young, with such appalling effect—it was up to all men and women of generous impulses to demonstrate a big self denial.

Well, he was big enough for that sacrifice, he hoped. It might come hard at first and he might not be able to extend his reform to embrace his household, but for himself he made his choice, to give over the use of wine and other drinks himself and to resist the code of custom that urged him to offer drink to others.

And he kept his word, although it was hard, harder than he could have believed or imagined. It was hard, for it

constituted a task involving a biological transformation as well as a social one. He told himself laughingly, when his hand went out for a familiar glass, that he surely was not to be bested in his new determination by a mere stripling. There are many kinds of heroism and young heroism at all times monopolizes the spot-light but none is greater than that of a man grown old who, seeing error in his forner ways, casts off the impulses and habits of a life time for the sake and in the name of the young generation. Mr. Cummings was such a hero.

CHAPTER XLV

One of the practical results of Duncan's new stand Mr. Cummings descerned on the following morning when daylight furnished a more comprehensive view of the subject — his financial situation. It was unfortunate at present. It would be made precarious by his last night's avowel.

One half of Duncan's place was mortgaged, the notes being held by Blythe. The other half had been made security for the money borrowed from three different wine men, Whitten, Jones and Powel. These men were by the circumstance of Duncan's avowed change of heart and opposition to the industry, his enemies. Each held his notes on demand. Cummings saw catastrophe ahead for Duncan should these men act on motives of ordinary revenge.

Inadvertantly he had assumed great responsibility for that catastrophe, if it came. Blythe's return fire, following Duncan's frustration of the former's plot against him, and its public exposure, had been a letter from Blythe's lawyer notifying Cameron that Blythe wanted his money and would at once begin foreclosure proceedings if it was not forthcoming.

Duncan sought Mr. Cummings, cursing himself for the confidence with which he had allowed the mortgage to remain in Blythe's hands, and made application for a loan from the Grower's Bank, of which Mr. Cummings was president.

"You want a loan of $25,000 to cover the mortgage?" said Mr. Cummings. "Well, I've no doubt in the world but that you can be accomodated but of course the matter will have to be taken up formally before the directors at the next meeting. I'd advise you to write Blythe and say that you've arranged

for the money and that it'll be forthcoming within the next ten or fifteen days."

Duncan did so at once. He would be immensely relieved when he had the papers in his own hands again. It was an extremely neat piece of work on Blythe's part and strictly along his line of conduct, disarming Duncan of ny anxiety in the matter when the latter offered to relieve him of the mortgage some weeks ago. And he had learned from Duncan who held the notes. Duncan's mind took sudden alarm again. But no, the men were his friends and, in the instance of Blythe's contemptible conduct toward him, had expressed their sentiments concerning the latter in most condemnatory terms. The notes would be safe with them.

That the situation had now changed, wholly and seriously, Mr. Cummings plainly saw and Duncan, his and his all, were in the hands of men now arrayed with Blythe on the side of those whom Duncan's new stand logically opposed. Also these men were among the directors of the Grower's Bank. Well, he must do his best for the boy. The directors' meeting was that evening.

After the board's usual preliminary business, Mr. Cummings introduced the subject of the loan: "Gentlemen, Duncan Cameron approached me some time ago and asked for a loan of $25,000 on two hundred and fifty acres of his place. I told him that I had no doubt that we could let him have it but that I would take the matter up with you tonight." The answer, couched by Whitten, he had anticipated.

"Well, I guess that matter can be easily disposed of. There are none of us hankering to accomodate Cameron after the way he's thrown down, his friends, the wine men."

"No, that's right," added Powell and Bernardini.

"What do you say, Blythe?" asked Whitten. Blythe had not spoken. "I understand Duncan wants the money

to take up a mortgage held by you. You'll be both the payer and the recipient in this case and you ought to have something to say," he added, facetiously. Blythe answered with an assumption of his large and suave manner.

"Well, I certainly wouldn't urge you men to a thing you can't do in justice to yourselves, put your selves out to do a favor for a man that's done you as Cameron did. Don't make the loan, I'd say. Teach the youngster a lesson. Let him scratch for it a while. I'm in no hurry for my money."

Cummings turned and looked at Blythe for a full moment. The latter sat toying carelessly with a paper knife. He had the air of a kindly man who was willing to forego his own preferences in the matter to accomplish the deserved rebuke of another. He had lied, lied again barefacedly, as he had done to Cummings on the morning after the plot designed against Duncan. This man was the limit of unmitigated gall, effrontery and dastardliness. His designs were as plain as the map on the wall yonder. Mr. Cummings bent foreward across the table:

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Blythe, but I guess that must be a mistake. I saw a letter written by your lawyer to Cameron two weeks ago in which you demanded payment of that mortgage and stated that if the money was not forthcoming you would begin foreclosure proceedings at once. It was because of that letter that Duncan asked for this loan. I say, Blythe, *what are you going to do with that mortgage*?"

"It's none of your damned business!" said Blythe. Mr. Cummings was not a young man but he was one of vigor and of Southern blood that would not take an insult. The other men threw themselves between the two.

"You say that, you low down, lying scoundrel; you who would ruin and blight a boy young enough to be your son! It isn't my business? Well, I'll make it my business. I

stood responsible for this loan. I made Cameron the tentative promise that it would be forthcoming. He wrote you that he would have the money shortly and you never told *him* you didn't want it, that he was welcome to an extension of time on it. Now then, you shall have it!" Mr. Cummings reached inside his pocket, brought out his check book and writing out a check to the full amount threw it across the table at Blythe. "There!" he said. The latter waved a dissenting but propitiatory hand.

"I think these gentlemen will agree, Mr. Cummings, that this isn't regular. I think they will agree that I can't take your check for Cameron's mortgage. Your own business knowledge will tell you that if you stop to think," he added with largeness. "And as I said before, I prefer to hold the obligation, at least until Cameron insists on relieving me of it."

Mr. Cumming's face went from the white of his recent rage, to scarlet. It was true. There was no business precedence by which Blythe could be made to take the check from him, and release the mortgage. If he, in his impulsiveness had stopped to think he would have known that. The man had had the insolence to refuse him and at the same time, to rebuke his apparent lack of business knowledge. He was furious but there was nothing to be done.

"Very well," he said, "we'll see about this later" He put through the remaining business with a curtness and expedition provided by his suppressed fury and humiliation, emphasized by Blythe's self-satisfied manner.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Cummings spent the following day trying to locate Duncan. He learned from his mother that he was in the mountains but the latter had misunderstood Duncan's stated destination. She thought it Walthers, instead of Welches. Walthers was an old claim of Cameron's on the farther side of the range. Mr. Cummings, by 'phone, dispatched a messenger from the mountain resort near Walther's to hunt Duncan and it was only in the late afternoon that it was learned that he was in another part of the mountains. Marlinee at Durfey's camp everheard the answer to an inquiry for the boy and at once gave the information of his whereabouts. Then she telephoned to Cummings.

"Mr. Cummings? This is Marlinee, Marlinee Madison. I heard of your inquiry. Duncan is up at Welches, my uncle's cabin, you know. We can send a messenger for him. I hope nothing serious has happened," she added anxiously.

"Oh, Miss Marlinee! I'm glad to hear your voice. You can get him? That's good, as soon as you can, please. No it's nothing serious," he fibbed, "just business, but its urgent. It's too late for him to catch the valley stage. I'll be in camp in an hour with the machine and you can get him down in the mean time. Good-bye."

Duncan was at the camp by the appointed hour. The apologies he had prepared for his conduct of the afternoon were waved aside by Marlinee in her anxiety to learn Duncan's conjecture concerning the matter in hand. Her own thoughts and his had been the same in the last hour. What could it mean? Why was Mr. Cummings seeking Duncan, coming urgently for him when both he and his daughter had but

recently repudiated him. Yet Mr. Cummings' voice over the 'phone had been most cordial.

"You don't think it's anything serious do you, dear?" asked Marlinee. "You look as if something was worrying you."

"I hope not, but I confess, I am worried," answered Duncan. "I had forgotten, overlooked in my other anxieties, something important, something I should have—but there's Mr. Cummings now! I'll let you know, I'll call you up when I get down to the valley," he called back, seeing his own anxiety immediately reflected in the face of the girl. "Don't worry, Marlinee."

On the way down, Mr. Cummings related the story of the directors' meeting, including in the recital his own efforts to go to Duncan's rescue.

"Now I'll tell you what I want you to do," he added. I've put $50,000 to your credit in the Growers' Bank today and I've drawn a check for half that amount in favor of Blythe. I want you to hunt up his attorney and give him the check and get that mortgage back *tonight*. Go to it, right off! I want to see that cur, Blythe, whipped.

"With the rest of the money I'd advise you to take up those outstanding notes of yours, at once. They're not safe, not safe a day with those men. No, that's all right," he added as Duncan turned to him with lips that could form no words but with eyes in which amazement and gratitude for Mr. Cummings' generous provision had drawn the quick tears.

"I'm not afraid of my security, if you aren't afraid to trust me with your fortunes. The vineyard is good, absolutely good, and when you get that grape juice factory of yours going, "he laughed, boyishly, "or turn your place over to raisin or table-grapes as I fancy you propose to do now you've turned prohibitionist, you'll more than pay out in a few years."

"But Mr. Cummings, I can't take your kindness. I'm

no longer eligible to it. Whitten was right, I can ask no further favors from my old friends, and then, *Corinne.*" Mr. Cummings was silent a moment and when he spoke his voice was husky:

"My boy, no one could be more regretful of one result of this regeneration of yours than I, for it seems to be true, that I have thereby lost a son. I am sorry. I am humiliated that it should be so. But this fact does not alter my affection for the son of my best friend, a boy who has come to take a place in my heart that no formal relationship could enhance. Duncan, lad, I love you as I would have loved my own son, had I one. But besides that, you have become something more. In your youth and the purpose of your new manhood you have renewed in me something of the moral vigor I fear I had sadly lost. You have revived within me elements of moral strength that have helped me to a long delayed determination. I am with you, my boy, in your new purpose and cause, with you with all the strength of my hand and the co-operation of my sympathy and material aid. I am proud and happy beyond words to have the privilege of helping you in your first steps on the new way." He extended his hand and Duncan took it in a grip of fellowship and understanding known only to strong men.

Duncan sought Blythe's attorney and gave him the check. He was working late at his office. Just returned from his summer outing he had found instructions awaiting him from Blythe to proceed at once to foreclose on Cameron. Blythe was impatient at having lost the day. The paper, just completed by the lawyer, lay upon his desk. The latter chagrined at the loss of the comfortable fee involved in the, anticipated proceeding, handed over to Duncan the mortgage, then off handedly remarked, "By the way, Mr. Cameron, I have three notes here for collection, formerly held against

you by Whitten, Powell and Jones. In the course of his business they came into Mr. Blythe's hands and he is urgent for immediate payment. He has already notified the bank to that effect.

There was no glimmer of emotion on Duncan's face to betray his surprise at Blythe's latest and most complete designs for his ruin. He drew out his check book and saying casually:

"Very well, I'll just settle for those at the same time," proceeded to write a check for the full amount.

CHAPTER XLVII

Duncan walked up the drive to the house. He took off his hat as he went and looked about him and up at the old trees bending over him, great eucalyptus trees of twenty or thirty years growth, and pepper trees interspersed with the huge bushes of oleander, white and red. He looked afar at the house, shabby, crying for paint and repair, but charming n its broad low lines and its possibilities of hospitality. *Home*! Yes it was home, his home, the home of his mother and if it were in the possibility of God's goodness, the home of *her*, dearest of all women. But he dared not think of that yet.

It seemed a month, a full summer since he had left it all and then everything had been over cast with the gloom of his own distracted imagination and the recent tragedy. How different now! His heart was filled with a great gratitude that it was yet his home, that the calamity so imminent, so nearly precipitated, had passed, that, thanks to Providence and Mr. Cummings, the place was his and a safe provision made for its future by an honest and faithful friend. God had been good!

This load and the others he had carried, blame for what he had done and what he had left undone, were all gone; healed, the self accusation. Even his mother's attitude, he was going home w th no anxiety for that. It had been one of the things they had talked of together, he and Marlinee. Like two following a tangled thread through many windings to its place of fastening, they had unwoven reasons. Fearlessly, with no rebuke, only compassion, he had faced the fact that his mother was one whose motives, like his own were not self-provided. Jeanie, like himself, had had no life of her own. The insistent personality of her father had plucked her,

a girl of unformed mind and humble family traditions. That same insistent personality had mastered her, soul, body and imagination with the complete subjugation of superior will, acting on a yielding and devoted mind.

It was that which provided the narrowness of judgment that left Duncan uninformed of the vital things concerning his ather. It was this that caused her rebellion, the first she had ever shown against a male creature, certainly the first toward her man son. The breach would heal. He would have patience. And already, as his thoughts comforted him he saw she was there to meet him, standing in the sunshine under the drooping trumpet-vine her hands wrapped in her large apron in the quaint old country way.

"Duncan!"

He took her in his arms very tenderly. She clung to him passionately and began to cry.

"Oh, I thocht ye wud never come hame! I've wanted ye sair. It was a shamefu' thing, the w'y I did ye, Duncan, lad, the nicht ago, but I was sair hurt, an' my heart was near to breakin'."

"Yes, mother, yes," he said. He led her to a seat and they sat down.

"I've knew a' the time that ye were richt, that the temperance folk were richt. But I cudna admeet it, it was like death tae admeet it, that *he* cud be wrang." Her voice broke in a great sob. Her hand felt out and met his. They clasped in an understanding and fellowship, perfect.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

It was characteristic of Duncan that he should begin at once the rehabilitation of his new life, both moral and material. After consultation with his mother on the matter he sought the nearest grape juice factory and signed with the company for his entire grape crop for the season. At the end of the season he intended grafting over his whole acreage to table and raisin grapes.

When he reviewed the prices brought by both the past years, compared with that paid for wine grapes, he wondered at his lack of common judgment that had kept him so long at his present business. There was no reason why La Mesa vineyard should not be made to pay out on new lines. No reason why he should not keep the place intact, if hard work and perseverance could do it, but if it seemed best to sell a portion he would not now hesitate. He owed something, much, to his mother, to ease her day by bringing relief from the long strain of financial stringency and give her comforts long denied. And he would look to his own material provision, to get out from under the burden and stigma of debt; get on his feet again as a man standing on his own financial bottom. That would be better and more to the credit of his father's name than the adherence to many impractical ideals.

His life seemed now strangely big, wide and free, and himself, one from whom the weights had been removed. His new vision gave him new sight in many ways and made his long apprenticeship in error seem almost incredible. His new perceptions of the liquor problem were more vivid than any other. As the doctor sees the skeleton in all men, the banker the man's financial status, and the dressmaker makes mental comments on the set of the gowns on the women she meets,

so Duncan now specializing in the subject of the liquor problem saw many things and many phases never before perceived. It seemed as though his thoughts were directed and kept in that line by a hundred suggestions and incidents daily, all more or less painful and revealing.

He felt a personal chagrin now, in the institutions whose business was such as to be carried on behind blinds and glazed doors. He felt a shame for the men who came out therefrom, a shame especially for the turned out work of those places seen in the drunks and bums that the saloon spewed forth.

Presently the logical end was accomplished in Duncan. He, who habitually threw his whole soul and strength into any work he undertook, in any cause he espoused, could be no mere on looker in this one, no mere rooter on the side lines in this fight. He sought Fessendon and got into it.

He offered himself for a lecture tour up and down the valley. He no longer considered that he was not an accomplished speaker; accomplished or not, he had something to say that must be said. His speech before the wine men had reached but a few of those his written arguments and former Wet talks throughout the valley had. He must undo this work, too. He gave his days to hard man's labor on the vineyard, and his nights to lecture engagements. The old family machine that had come to cry its increasing infirmities to the world was heard nightly on the avenue speeding toward some engagement place. And Duncan talked. Oh, how he talked, no embellishments, no frills, just plain facts!

Also he kept his interest in the Journal, now in McWhirter's administrative hands, and abetted him in the way of newspaper publicity in the interests of the Drys. The change in the management had come in the interval between the tragedy on the vineyard and his renouncement speech before the wine men. McWhirter, expecting his opposition to the new

sentiments of the sheet, had made him an offer for his interest in it and was dumfounded at Duncan's frank statement of his own change of heart. The men at once made alliance, an alliance of resources and efficiency that accomplished great things for the Cause. McWhirter, strange as it may seem, stayed in the newspaper game because he wanted to. He had inherited a cozy fortune some years back and after a trip around the world, when he visited the places known to him by heart from his much reading, he returned and showed up the following morning at the Journal office.

"Well, I'm ready to go on the desk whenever you want me," he said to Morrison, and the latter embraced him like the p overbial long lost brother.

McWhirter went into his new enterprise with perfect understanding of the probable outcome. To publish a Dry sheet in the wine grape districts was waving a red rag at the bulls. But, as McWhirter explained to Duncan and Fessendon, "This sheet's been running long enough, it's been three years since it went to smash, and I don't like to see precedents ignored, especially by an outlander like Morrison."

And Norris stayed with the Journal. It was not really the sacrifice that it sounded, and therein Norris was robbed of another opportunity of posing in the "movie hero" role. With Hayward gone (Hayward was taking the Keeley cure and after that he intended cutting out and away from all his former associates and going back east) and Winston off the job—Winston had been afraid of the prohibition regime—little Norris had his hands full and his salary nearly doubled. There was nothing stingy about McWhirter. If he went to smash he was going to smash hard. And after that he intended looking after Norris some other way. He was, as Fessendon had deplored, childless, and he loved the boy. It was that, his affection and paternal concern for him, that turned the

balance of his sentiment in favor of the Drys. Fessendon's last appeal had been effective, too.

Norris and Glad were very happy. The wedding was to be next month. The only shadow that fell across their felicity was the news Norris turned up on his beat one day. It was old news, not of the sort rushed to the news column. Molly McFee had committed suicide in one of the baudy houses across the track. She had won the case against Westmeyer that sent him up for twenty years. She had come back to her old haunts and sought her end, like thousands on the same tragic road.

Norris with infinitesimal pains recovered the body from the potter's field and had it carried to Cayonsville, to the cemetery where little Emmy was buried. It was the least he could do, and Glad abbetted him. Molly had done much for them, her sacrifice had been great.

So they laid Molly away beside little Emmy, in "a real nice place among the best people." They had a stone set up for her, a *white* stone. It bore her name, her real name: Margaret Wilson, and the date of her birth and death. She was not old, only twenty-one. There was a line of reading, too, on the stone. Glad had found it in the worn bible of Norris' mother. They thought it appropriate for Molly, remembering with gentle gratitude her service to them, to humanity. It was in the words of the compassionate Jesus, and read:

"She hath done what she could."

CHAPTER XLIX.

In all of Duncan's new enterprises and interests, in every determination and choice he had made, his mind involuntarily turned to one, for council and approval. That one was Marlinee. His need for her increased. He could think of no future apart from her, as he could not remember any past when he had really lived, that had been separated from her presence and comradeship.

Corinne had dropped to the most inconsequential of places in his mind, nowdays, these days of fine new activities, of fine new ambitions and expectations. He passed her occasionally on the avenue and was able to lift his hat with a bow and smile of the utmost unconcern. Indeed, the shock that had thrown to the ground the fabric of his former life, with all its predilections and preferences, had revealed his attachment for Corinne in a new light. He understood now, how misguided had been the impulses that set their ambitions on this girl between whom and himself, by the manner of their up bringing, their different standards and their whole out-look on life there could have been no possible compatibility.

Marlinee was still in the hills. McWhirter had extended her outing an extra week in view of the need he acknowledged when he thought of her, and she was still at her cabin. Mammy was with her, now. Glad, Norris had carried off to his relatives in Cayonsville, and the trousseau was getting on beautifully.

Duncan held off his desire as a strong man holds off his own interests, till the greater are served. Then he saddled his horse and left for the mountains. He pushed Brewster till he was wont to faint, across the desert and wash and up the canyon. Every step nearer his goal increased his determination, and in his new man's passion the invincible will of his father

grew. Marlinee *must* hear him! It was not possible that his being could cry for her as it did and not her's for him. She might not know it, in her naughty willfulness, in the pretty teasing way with which she met the overtures of all male-kind, she might try and make him think, make herself think, that she had no need of him. He would show her; she must see.

He had not written her of his coming, he wanted her unprepared, and he was taken aback somewhat by the calmness of her reception. It was just at sunset that he and Brewster came into the open in the clearing above the cabin and upon Marlinee in the path just before them. She had walked out on the trail to the point of the finest view. It was her nightly custom just at sun down. He could not know that ten minutes before, the view and all else had been forgotten when she heard far below and out of sight on the trail, but distinct, the thud of a horse's foot and a familiar voice in admonishment. She had started up and all the blood in her surged to the surface, tingling. Her hands flew to her breast and her eyes looked like those of a wild thing that waits and listens, terrified, yet glad.

Now he was there, just beyond that great boulder. The next minute he would see, would be here beside her. "Ah!" her breath came in a little gasp.

He waited for no preliminaries, in spite of her disconcerting coolness. He flung the bridle over Brewster's head—Brewster might go hang, if he liked—and throwing himself out of the stirrups, reached the girl with a stride.

"Marlinee, this is a token, you are here to meet me!"

"Oh, no," she laughed, "just to see if that shiftless Bil y Baker has gotten my barn painted yet. See," she pointed past him coolly, "he has, that's it gleaming down there to the right where the sun strikes it." He caught the hand abruptly

and drew her to him till he gazed into her face with his steady eyes.

"Marlinee, look at me. Listen to me. I love you! I want you, I have wanted you every moment since I have been away. I wanted you the moment you had gone, and I awoke. It all came to me then, at that moment. I want you now with all my being and my soul. You are all to me that a woman could be to a man. I want your love, the comfort of your arms as on that day, I shall never know peace or happiness till I have them.

"Oh, I know," as her face dropped, blushes turning to paleness. He had carried her off her feet by the suddenness of him, the passion of him. "I know what you are thinking of. It took me a long time to find out, and I thought it was someone else I cared for. It was a mistake, the feeling I had for her, Corinne. It is like—like anything pale, weak, inferior, beside this perfect, this *holy* thing! I have always loved you, depended on you, lived in and by you, ever since I knew you. You know that. But I didn't *know*—you were so clever, you had so much wisdom. I was a little afraid of you, a little in awe of you I think," he paused and she laughed, a little trembling laugh with a lilt of mockery in it.

"Afraid, afraid of me? Ah, but you are so much greater, you have so much, so much more—"

"So much what?"

"Why, *this*," she touched his strong arms with the daintiest of fingers, "and *this*," her hands went up on his wide shoulders. "You are big," she measured it off with her hands, "and I am little. You are *strong*, and I am so weak!"

"*Dear*!"

"You are a *man*, and I am just a woman." He laughed big and deep; for the time the momentous question was parried by her coquetry, by his joy in her.

"I am a man and you are a woman, but this grea' and glorious state of ours, says we are equal and the same, and you can get out and 'whup' me any old day you like at the polls. Marlinee!" he gave her a little shake, "*what* you going to say?" But she parleyed:

"You don't understand. A woman, a woman can vote—oh yes—and do a lot of things that a man can and can't, but she never gets away from being a woman and she still has to have a man!"

"Marlinee!"

"Yes, a real man. One that can bully and boss her." He shouted in merriment. *This* from Marlinee who was never satisfied to leave the field of argument without the proverbial last word.

"Oh, of course I don't mean one that will knock her about and make her pack and carry for him, but a man big enough and strong enough to *do* for her, and to *think* for her—she gets so tired of doing, and thinking. No, I mean make *her* do and think as she ought to. Not because he has the muscle to make her do it, but the heart and soul that knows. She wants a man bigger than herself, body, mind and spirit; oh, she does, every woman does! She wants a *master*."

"*Marlinee*!" His gladness in her, his surprise and joy in the new Marlinee he was discovering was greater than words. He took her nervous, outstretched hands, but she drew them from him gently. "Wait," she said. She seated herself on a boulder at the side of the trail and he sat by her in a great happiness and patience, his eyes contentedly on the receding valley, or absently watching a tiny gleam of his spur in the twilight as he hugged his crossed legs.

"Oh Duncan, I want to tell you all my heart! I must, before," she did not finish. "I have been just sick for months and years about it; about *men*. They think so little, they care

so little about it, that they *are* men. They expect a woman, if she is good, to be absolutely good and careful, and if she goes the least bit out of the way its all over with her. They call her, the good woman, an 'angel'. And she must stay an angel, a nice lonely angel to the end of her days.

"But a man, a man who is the first work of the Almighty, the 'head of the woman', it's no matter about him. He can do what he likes. He has no thought, no pride in his greatness; that he stands in the world a god, the creator of life and generation. He has no thought to keep clean and fine and honorable for that work." She turned suddenly to him and gave him both her hands, laid them on his breast with her face close to him.

"I love you, Duncan, I have always loved you!" her voice came with a quick intake. He had closed on her hands so fiercely.

"But no, not yet. Listen, dear, just one moment!" She held him off, slipped from him and moved away, standing apart, her eyes looking far across the valley. He waited breathlessly.

"I told you I love you, and its true. I do, but I do more than that I *covet* you. I have always coveted you, always, ever since I came to know and understand other men. You are so different! You have self-respect, you have pride, you have pride in your flesh. And that is *everything*, isn't it? Life is so vague; we know so little of its purpose; a future—heaven and immortality—yes, we believe in all that, but the *now*: to keep the law of the *now*!

"That's all we know, all we really know. And that is nature's law, the law of the God of nature; the law all nature keeps in integrity, but men. That law to 'bring forth after one's kind', to 'increase and multiply on the earth'. How wonderful to engage in the work of creation. For *two* to co-operate in

that work." She spoke with awe. "The work of the Almighty!" In the dim light he saw her face diffused, her eyes alight, one hand to her bosom, the other reaching back in the darkness to him. He took it tremblingly.

"To bring life into the world, life that *lives forever*. Isn't that enough to make one keep his heart true and his life clean? That's what I saw in life, and it was very great. But there were so few great enough to understand, to see it. None, but you—*you*. And I loved you, I coveted you because you were great enough."

"Dear! *Dear*!" he kissed her hand with a great reverence.

"You mustn't mind because I thought of it first, perhaps," she went on. "You must not mind if I think for you sometimes, ahead of you. It is the *mother* part. And there is always that in which you are greater, as I said, oh, so much greater; your strength, your arms, oh, how I have wanted them when I was tired, and I couldn't think enough for myself, I have wanted my other self, *you*!

She turned and he smiled, his eyes full of understanding and a happiness too great for words. He held out his arms, and she came to him, slowly, delaying each step as if the end were too dear to hasten.

"Now," she said, and his arms enfolded her.

He had no words for the honor for which her woman's soul had chosen him. Great thoughts passed through him, mighty thoughts, and his mind was opened. He understood life and love and the meaning of all spiritual things, moral effort and the struggle and travail of valiant souls against evil, the evil that would slay life. This was that for which the prophets and teachers had lived and men died, the martyrs and the Christ; what men like Fessendon and himself, please God, would give their man's hand and strength to, and all the resources of their minds, not for the attainment of a remote

heaven and the saving of men's souls to eternity, not that only, but this other work: the regeneration of the world, the world where human beings live and bring forth; the making of it a place safe, where men shall not prey on other men or on the children of men, but where man and woman shall have opportunity to live and keep the royal law, to mate in cleanliness and beauty and bring forth their kind in honor, that not only bodies shall live in peace and health and prosperity, but souls in integrity and the fulfilment of the purpose of the Creator.

This was the Light, the light that broke upon Duncan's consciousness that first night, bringing the beginning of knowledge. This was the light elaborating that knowledge to all the boundaries of creation. This was the Ideal, not an idealism remote and apart from the purposes of life, but its fabric and substance.

"*Marlinee*!" He took her to him with all his being. It was their marriage day.

The End

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW

NOV 29 1915

MAR 13 1916

SEP 14 1917

MAR 14 1919

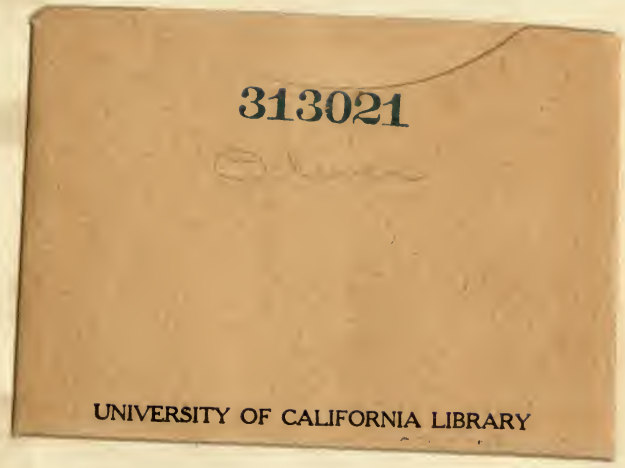
JUL 22 1920

FEB 22 1921

DEC 17 1923

JUN 7 1926

JUL 30 1927

30m-1,'1

YC 46674